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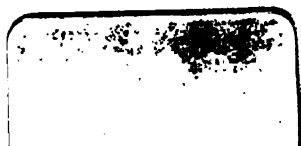
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19

The Pleasures of England.

LECTURES GIVEN IN OXFORD,

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, D.C.L., LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND HONORARY FELLOW OF CORPUS-CHRISTI COLLEGE,

DURING HIS

SECOND TENURE OF THE SLADE PROFESSORSHIP.

LECTURE I.

THE PLEASURES OF LEARNING.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1884.

Price One Shilling.

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LECTURE I.

THE PLEASURES OF LEARNING,

Bertha to Osburga.

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THE PLEASURES OF LEARNING.

BERTHA TO OSBURGA.

IN the short review of the present state of English Art, given you last year, I left necessarily many points untouched, and others unexplained. The seventh lecture, which I did not think it necessary to read aloud, furnished you with some of the corrective statements of which, whether spoken or not, it was extremely desirable that you should estimate the balancing weight. These I propose in the present course farther to illustrate, and to arrive with you at, I hope, a just—you would not wish it to be a flattering—estimate of the conditions of our English artistic life, past and present, in order that with due allowance for them we may determine, with some security, what those of us

4 *I. The Pleasures of Learning.*

who have faculty ought to do, and those who have sensibility, to admire.

2. In thus rightly doing and feeling, you will find summed a wider duty, and granted a greater power, than the moral philosophy at this moment current with you has ever conceived; and a prospect opened to you besides, of such a Future for England as you may both hopefully and proudly labour for with your hands, and those of you who are spared to the ordinary term of human life, even see with your eyes, when all this tumult of vain avarice and idle pleasure, into which you have been plunged at birth, shall have passed into its appointed perdition.

3. I wish that you would read for introduction to the lectures I have this year arranged for you, that on the Future of England, which I gave to the cadets at Woolwich in the first year of my Professorship here, 1869; and which is now placed as the main conclusion of the "Crown of Wild Olive": and with it, very attentively, the close of my

inaugural lecture given here; for the matter, no less than the tenor of which, I was reproved by all my friends, as irrelevant and ill-judged;—which, nevertheless, is of all the pieces of teaching I have ever given from this chair, the most pregnant and essential to whatever studies, whether of Art or Science, you may pursue, in this place or elsewhere, during your lives.

The opening words of that passage I will take leave to read to you again,—for they must still be the ground of whatever help I can give you, worth your acceptance.

“There is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. We are still unde-generate in race: a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness to govern, and the grace to obey. We have been taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now finally betray, or learn to defend by fulfilling. And we are rich in an in-

6 *I. The Pleasures of Learning.*

heritance of honour, bequeathed to us through a thousand years of noble history, which it should be our daily thirst to increase with splendid avarice; so that Englishmen, if it be a sin to covet honour, should be the most offending souls alive. Within the last few years we have had the laws of natural science opened to us with a rapidity which has been blinding by its brightness; and means of transit and communication given to us, which have made but one kingdom of the habitable globe.

“One kingdom;—but who is to be its king? Is there to be no king in it, think you, and every man to do that which is right in his own eyes? Or only kings of terror, and the obscene empires of Mammon and Belial? Or will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle; for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts;—faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of irreverent and ephemeral visions

—faithful servant of time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour, of goodwill towards men? ”

The fifteen years that have passed since I spoke these words must, I think, have convinced some of my immediate hearers that the need for such an appeal was more pressing than they then imagined;—while they have also more and more convinced me myself that the ground I took for it was secure, and that the youths and girls now entering on the duties of active life are able to accept and fulfil the hope I then held out to them.

In which assurance I ask them to-day to begin the examination with me, very earnestly, of the question laid before you in that seventh of my last year's lectures, whether London, as it is now, be indeed the natural, and therefore the heaven-appointed outgrowth of the inhabi-

tation, these 1800 years, of the valley of the Thames by a progressively instructed and disciplined people; or if not, in what measure and manner the aspect and spirit of the great city may be possibly altered by your acts and thoughts.

In my introduction to the *Economist* of Xenophon I said that every fairly educated European boy or girl ought to learn the history of five cities,—Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence, and London; that of London including, or at least compelling in parallel study, some knowledge also of the history of Paris.

A few words are enough to explain the reasons for this choice. The history of Athens, rightly told, includes all that need be known of Greek religion and arts. That of Rome, the victory of Christianity over Paganism; those of Venice and Florence sum the essential facts respecting the Christian arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Music; and that of London, in her sisterhood with Paris,

the development of Christian Chivalry and Philosophy, with their exponent art of Gothic architecture.

Without the presumption of forming a distinct design, I yet hoped at the time when this division of study was suggested, with the help of my pupils, to give the outlines of their several histories during my work in Oxford. Variously disappointed and arrested, alike by difficulties of investigation and failure of strength, I may yet hope to lay down for you, beginning with your own metropolis, some of the lines of thought in following out which such a task might be most effectively accomplished.

You observe that I speak of architecture as the chief exponent of the feelings both of the French and English races. Together with it, however, most important evidence of character is given by the illumination of manuscripts, and by some forms of jewellery and metallurgy: and my purpose in this course of lectures is to illustrate by all these

arts the phases of national character which it is impossible that historians should estimate, or even observe, with accuracy, unless they are cognizant of excellence in the aforesaid modes of structural and ornamental craftsmanship.

In one respect, as indicated by the title chosen for this course, I have varied the treatment of their subject from that adopted in all my former books. Hitherto, I have always endeavoured to illustrate the personal temper and skill of the artist; holding the wishes or taste of his spectators at small account, and saying of Turner you ought to like him, and of Salvator, you ought not, etc., etc., without in the least considering what the genius or instinct of the spectator might otherwise demand, or approve. But in the now attempted sketch of Christian history, I have approached every question from the people's side, and examined the nature, not of the special faculties by which the work was produced, but of the general

instinct by which it was asked for, and enjoyed. Therefore I thought the proper heading for these papers should represent them as descriptive of the *Pleasures* of England, rather than of its *Arts*.

And of these pleasures, necessarily, the leading one was that of Learning, in the sense of receiving instruction;—a pleasure totally separate from that of finding out things for yourself,—and an extremely sweet and sacred pleasure, when you know how to seek it, and receive.

On which I am the more disposed, and even compelled, here to insist, because your modern ideas of Development imply that you must all turn out what you are to be, and find out what you are to know, for yourselves, by the inevitable operation of your anterior affinities and inner consciences:—whereas the old idea of education was that the baby material of you, however accidentally or inevitably born, was at least to be by external force, and ancestral knowledge, bred; and

treated by its Fathers and Tutors as a plastic vase, to be shaped or mannered as *they* chose, not as *it* chose, and filled, when its form was well finished and baked, with sweetness of sound doctrine, as with Hybla honey, or Arabian spikenard.

Without debating how far these two modes of acquiring knowledge—finding out, and being told—may severally be good, and in perfect instruction combined, I have to point out to you that, broadly, Athens, Rome, and Florence are self-taught, and internally developed; while all the Gothic races, without any exception, but especially those of London and Paris, are afterwards taught by these; and had, therefore, when they chose to accept it, the delight of being instructed, without trouble or doubt, as fast as they could read or imitate; and brought forward to the point where their own northern instincts might wholesomely superimpose or graft some national ideas upon these sound instructions. Read over what I said on this subject in the third of my

lectures last year (page 79), and simplify that already brief statement further, by fastening in your mind Carlyle's general symbol of the best attainments of northern religious sculpture,—"three whale-cubs combined by boiling," and reflecting that the mental history of all northern European art is the modification of that graceful type, under the orders of the Athena of Homer and Phidias.

And this being quite indisputably the broad fact of the matter, I greatly marvel that your historians never, so far as I have read, think of proposing to you the question—what you might have made of yourselves *without* the help of Homer and Phidias: what sort of beings the Saxon and the Celt, the Frank and the Dane, might have been by this time, untouched by the spear of Pallas, unrulèd by the rod of Agricola, and sincerely the native growth, pure of root, and ungrafted in fruit of the clay of Isis, rock of Dovrefeldt, and sands of Elbe? Think of it, and think chiefly what form the ideas, and images, of your

natural religion might probably have taken, if no Roman missionary had ever passed the Alps in charity, and no English king in pilgrimage.

I have been of late indebted more than I can express to the friend who has honoured me by the dedication of his recently published lectures on 'Older England;' and whose eager enthusiasm and far collected learning have enabled me for the first time to assign their just meaning and value to the ritual and imagery of Saxon devotion. But while every page of Mr. Hodgett's book, and, I may gratefully say also, every sentence of his teaching, has increased and justified the respect in which I have always been by my own feeling disposed to hold the mythologies founded on the love and knowledge of the natural world, I have also been led by them to conceive, far more forcibly than hitherto, the power which the story of Christianity possessed, first heard through the wreaths of that cloudy superstition, in the substitution,

for its vaporescent allegory, of a positive and literal account of a real Creation, and an instantly present, omnipresent, and compassionate God.

Observe, there is no question whatever in examining this influence, how far Christianity itself is true, or the transcendental doctrines of it intelligible. Those who brought you the story of it believed it with all their souls to be true,—and the effect of it on the hearts of your ancestors was that of an unquestionable, infinitely lucid message straight from God, doing away with all difficulties, grief, and fears for those who willingly received it, nor by any, except wilfully and obstinately vile persons, to be, by any possibility, denied or refused.

And it was precisely, observe, the vivacity and joy with which the main fact of Christ's life was accepted which gave the force and wrath to the controversies instantly arising about its nature.

Those controversies vexed and shook, but

never undermined, the faith they strove to purify, and the miraculous presence, errorless precept, and loving promises of their Lord were alike undoubted, alike rejoiced in, by every nation that heard the word of Apostles. The Pelagian's assertion that immortality could be won by man's will, and the Arian's that Christ possessed no more than man's nature, never for an instant—or in any country—hindered the advance of the moral law and intellectual hope of Christianity. Far the contrary; the British heresy concerning Free Will, though it brought bishop after bishop into England to extinguish it, remained an extremely healthy and active element in the British mind down to the days of John Bunyan and the guide Great Heart, and the calmly Christian justice and simple human virtue of Theodoric were the very roots and first burgeons of the regeneration of Italy.*

* Gibbon, in his 37th chapter, makes Ulphilas also an Arian, but might have forborne, with grace, his own definition of orthodoxy:—and you are to observe generally that at this

But of the degrees in which it was possible for any barbarous nation to receive during the first five centuries, either the spiritual power of Christianity itself, or the instruction in classic art and science which accompanied it, you cannot rightly judge, without taking the pains, and they will not, I think, be irksome, of noticing carefully, and fixing permanently in your minds, the separating characteristics of the greater races, both in those who learned and those who taught.

Of the Huns and Vandals we need not speak. They are merely forms of Punishment and Destruction. Put them out of your minds altogether, and remember only the names of the immortal nations, which abide on their native rocks, and plough their unconquered plains, at this hour.

time the teachers who admitted the inferiority of Christ to the Father as touching his Manhood, were often counted among Arians, but quite falsely. Christ's own words, "My Father is greater than I," end that controversy at once. Arianism consists not in asserting the subjection of the Son to the Father, but in denying the subjected Divinity.

Briefly, in the north,—Briton, Norman, Frank, Saxon, Ostrogoth, Lombard; briefly, in the south,—Tuscan, Roman, Greek, Syrian, Egyptian, Arabian.

Now of these races, the British (I avoid the word Celtic, because you would expect me to say Keltic; and I don't mean to, lest you should be wanting me next to call the patroness of music St. Kekilia), the British, including Breton, Cornish, Welsh, Irish, Scot, and Pict, are, I believe, of all the northern races, the one which has deepest love of external nature;—and the richest inherent gift of pure music and song, as such; separated from the intellectual gift which raises song into poetry. They are naturally also religious, and for some centuries after their own conversion are one of the chief evangelizing powers in Christendom. But they are neither apprehensive nor receptive;—they cannot understand the classic races, and learn scarcely anything from them; perhaps better so, if the classic

racés had been more careful to understand *them*.

* Next, the Norman is scarcely more apprehensive than the Celt, but he is more constructive, and uses to good advantage what he learns from the Frank. His main characteristic is an energy, which never exhausts itself in vain anger, desire, or sorrow, but abides and rules, like a living rock:—where he wanders, he flows like lava, and congeals like granite.

Next, I take in this first sketch the Saxon and Frank together, both pre-eminently apprehensive, both docile exceedingly, imaginative in the highest, but in life active more than pensive, eager in desire, swift of invention, keenly sensitive to animal beauty, but with difficulty rational, and rarely, for the future, wise. Under the conclusive name of Ostrogoth, you may class whatever tribes are native to central Germany, and develope themselves, as time goes on, into that power of the German Cæsars which still asserts itself as an empire

against the licence and insolence of modern republicanism,—of which races, though this general name, no description can be given in rapid terms.

And lastly, the Lombards, who, at the time we have to deal with, were sternly indocile, gloomily imaginative,—of almost Norman energy, and differing from all the other western nations chiefly in this notable particular, that while the Celt is capable of bright wit and happy play, and the Norman, Saxon, and Frank all alike delight in caricature, the Lombards, like the Arabians, never jest.

These, briefly, are the six barbaric nations who are to be taught: and of whose native arts and faculties, before they receive any tutorship from the south, I find no well-sifted account in any history:—but thus much of them, collecting your own thoughts and knowledge, you may easily discern—they were all, with the exception of the Scots, practical workers and builders in wood; and those of them who had coasts, first rate sea-boat builders, with

fine mathematical instincts and practice in that kind far developed, necessarily good sail-weaving, and sound fur-stitching, with stout ironwork of nail and rivet; rich copper and some silver work in decoration—the Celts developing peculiar gifts in linear design, but wholly incapable of drawing animals or figures;—the Saxons and Franks having enough capacity in that kind, but no thought of attempting it; the Normans and Lombards still farther remote from any such skill. More and more, it seems to me wonderful that under your British block-temple, grimly extant on its pastoral plain, or beside the first crosses engraved on the rock of Whithorn—you English and Scots do not oftener consider what you might or could have come to, left to yourselves.

Next, let us form the list of your tutor nations, in whom it generally pleases you to look at nothing but the corruptions. If we could get into the habit of thinking more of our own corruptions and more of *their*

virtues, we should have a better chance of learning the true laws alike of art and destiny. But, the safest way of all, is to assure ourselves that true knowledge of any thing or any creature is only of the good of it; that its nature and life are in that, and that what is diseased,—that is to say, unnatural and mortal,—you must cut away from it in contemplation, as you would in surgery.

Of the six tutor nations, two, the Tuscan and Arab, have no effect on early Christian England. But the Roman, Greek, Syrian, and Egyptian, act together from the earliest times; you are to study the influence of Rome upon England in Agricola, Constantius, St. Benedict, and St. Gregory; of Greece upon England in the artists of Byzantium and Ravenna; of Syria and Egypt upon England in St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and St. Athanase.

St. Jerome, in central Bethlehem; St. Augustine, Carthaginian by birth, in truth a

converted Tyrian, Athanase, Egyptian, symmetric and fixed as an Egyptian aisle; Chrysostom, golden mouth of all; these are, indeed, every one teachers of all the western world, but St. Augustine especially of lay, as distinguished from monastic, Christianity to the Franks, and finally to us. His rule, expanded into the treatise of the City of God, is taken for guide of life and policy by Charlemagne, and becomes certainly the fountain of Evangelical Christianity, distinctively so called, (and broadly the lay Christianity of Europe, since, in the purest form of it, that is to say, the most merciful, charitable, variously applicable, kindly wise.) The greatest type of it, as far as I know, is St. Martin of Tours, whose character is sketched, I think in the main rightly, in the Bible of Amiens; and you may bind together your thoughts of its course by remembering that Alcuin, born at York, dies in the Abbey of St. Martin, at Tours; that as St. Augustine was in his writings Charlemagne's Evangelist in faith,

Alcuin was, in living presence, his master in rhetoric, logic, and astronomy, with the other physical sciences.

A hundred years later than St. Augustine, comes the rule of St. Benedict—the Monastic rule, virtually, of European Christianity, ever since—and theologically the Law of Works, as distinguished from the Law of Faith. St. Augustine and all the disciples of St. Augustine tell Christians what they should feel and think: St. Benedict and all the disciples of St. Benedict tell Christians what they should say and do.

In the briefest, but also the perfectest distinction, the disciples of St. Augustine are those who open the door to Christ—"If any man hear my voice"; but the Benedictines those to whom Christ opens the door—"To him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Now, note broadly the course and action of this rule, as it combines with the older one. St. Augustine's, accepted heartily by Clovis, and, with various degrees of understanding, by

the kings and queens of the Merovingian dynasty, makes seemingly little difference in their conduct, so that their profession of it remains a scandal to Christianity to this day; and yet it lives, in the true hearts among them, down from St. Clotilde to her great granddaughter Bertha, who in becoming Queen of Kent, builds under its chalk downs her own little chapel to St. Martin, and is the first effectively and permanently useful missionary to the Saxons, the beginner of English Erudition,—the first laid corner stone of beautiful English character.

I think henceforward you will find the memorandum of dates which I have here set down for my own guidance more simply useful than those confused by record of unimportant persons and inconsequent events, which form the indices of common history.

From the year of the Saxon invasion 449, there are exactly 400 years to the birth of Alfred, 849. You have no difficulty in remembering those cardinal years. Then,

you have Four great men and great events to remember, at the close of the fifth century. Clovis, and the founding of Frank Kingdom; Theodoric and the founding of the Gothic Kingdom; Justinian and the founding of Civil law; St. Benedict and the founding of Religious law.

Of Justinian, and his work, I am not able myself to form any opinion—and it is, I think, unnecessary for students of history to form any, until they are able to estimate clearly the benefits, and mischief, of the civil law of Europe in its present state. But to Clovis, Theodoric, and St. Benedict, without any question, we owe more than any English historian has yet ascribed,—and they are easily held in mind together, for Clovis ascended the Frank throne in the year of St. Benedict's birth, 481. Theodoric fought the battle of Verona, and founded the Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy twelve years later, in 493, and thereupon married the sister of Clovis. That marriage is always passed in a

casual sentence, as if a merely political one, and while page after page is spent in following the alternations of furious crime and fatal chance, in the contests between Fredegonde and Brunehaut, no historian ever considers whether the great Ostrogoth who wore in the battle of Verona the dress which his mother had woven for him, was likely to have chosen a wife without love!—or how far the perfectness, justice, and temperate wisdom of every ordinance of his reign was owing to the sympathy and counsel of his Frankish queen.

You have to recollect, then, thus far, only three cardinal dates:—

449. Saxon invasion.

481. Clovis reigns and St. Benedict is born.

493. Theodoric conquers at Verona.

Then, roughly, a hundred years later, in 590, Ethelbert, the fifth from Hengist, and Bertha, the third from Clotilde, are king and queen of Kent. I cannot find the date of their marriage, but the date, 590, which

you must recollect for cardinal, is that of Gregory's accession to the pontificate, and I believe Bertha was then in middle life, having persevered in her religion firmly, but inoffensively, and made herself beloved by her husband and people. She, in England, Theodolinda in Lombardy, and St. Gregory in Rome:—in their hands, virtually lay the destiny of Europe.

Then the period from Bertha to Osburga, 590 to 849—say 250 years—is passed by the Saxon people in the daily more reverent learning of the Christian faith, and daily more peaceful and skilful practice of the humane arts and duties which it invented and inculcated.

The statement given by Sir Edward Creasy of the result of these 250 years of lesson is, with one correction, the most simple and just that I can find.

“A few years before the close of the sixth century, the country was little more than a wide battle-field, where gallant but rude

warriors fought with each other, or against the neighbouring Welsh or Scots; unheeding and unheeded by the rest of Europe, or, if they attracted casual attention, regarded with dread and disgust as the fiercest of barbarians and the most untameable of pagans. In the eighth century, England was looked up to with admiration and gratitude, as superior to all the other countries of Western Europe in piety and learning, and as the land whence the most zealous and successful saints and teachers came forth to convert and enlighten the still barbarous regions of the continent."

This statement is broadly true; yet the correction it needs is a very important one. England,—under her first Alfred of Northumberland, and under Ina of Wessex, is indeed during these centuries the most learned, thoughtful, and progressive of European states. But she is not a missionary power. The missionaries are always to her, not from her:—for the very reason that she is learning so eagerly, she does not take to preaching.

Ina founds his Saxon school at Rome not to teach Rome, nor convert the Pope, but to drink at the source of knowledge, and to receive laws from direct and unquestioned authority. The missionary power was wholly Scotch and Irish, and that power was wholly one of zeal and faith, not of learning. I will ask you, in the course of my next lecture, to regard it attentively; to-day, I must rapidly draw to the conclusions I would leave with you.

It is more and more wonderful to me as I think of it, that no effect whatever was produced on the Saxon, nor on any other healthy race of the North, either by the luxury of Rome, or by her art, whether constructive or imitative. The Saxon builds no aqueducts—designs no roads, rounds no theatres in imitation of her,—envies none of her vile pleasures,—admires, so far as I can judge, none of her far-carried realistic art. I suppose that it needs intelligence of a more advanced kind to see the qualities of

complete sculpture: and that we may think of the Northern intellect as still like that of a child, who cares to picture its own thoughts in its own way, but does not care for the thoughts of older people, or attempt to copy what it feels too difficult. This much at least is certain, that for one cause or another, everything that now at Paris or London our painters most care for and try to realize, of ancient Rome, was utterly innocuous and unattractive to the Saxon: while his mind was frankly open to the direct teaching of Greece and to the methods of bright decoration employed in the Byzantine Empire: for these alone seemed to his fancy suggestive of the glories of the brighter world promised by Christianity. Jewellery, vessels of gold and silver, beautifully written books, and music, are the gifts of St. Gregory alike to the Saxon and Lombard; all these beautiful things being used, not for the pleasure of the present life, but as the symbols of another; while the drawings in Saxon manuscripts, in which,

better than in any other remains of their life, we can read the people's character, are rapid endeavours to express for themselves, and convey to others, some likeness of the realities of sacred event in which they had been instructed. They differ from every archaic school of former design in this evident correspondence with an imagined reality. All previous archaic art whatsoever is symbolic and decorative—not realistic. The contest of Herakles with the Hydra on a Greek vase is a mere sign that such a contest took place, not a picture of it, and in drawing that sign the potter is always thinking of the effect of the engraved lines on the curves of his pot, and taking care to keep out of the way of the handle ;—but a Saxon monk would scratch his idea of the Fall of the angels or the Temptation of Christ over a whole page of his manuscript in variously explanatory scenes, evidently full of inexpressible vision, and eager to explain and illustrate all that he felt or believed.

Of the progress and arrest of these gifts, I shall have to speak in my next address; but I must regretfully conclude to-day with some brief warning against the complacency which might lead you to regard them as either at that time entirely original in the Saxon race, or at the present day as signally characteristic of it. That form of complacency is exhibited in its most amiable but, therefore, most deceptive guise, in the passage with which the late Dean of Westminster concluded his lecture at Canterbury in April 1854, on the subject of the landing of Augustine. I will not spoil the emphasis of the passage by comment as I read, but must take leave afterwards to intimate some grounds for abatement in the fervour of its self-gratulatory ecstasy.

“Let any one sit on the hill of the little church of St. Martin, and look on the view which is there spread before his eyes. Immediately below are the towers of the great abbey of St. Augustine, where Christian

learning and civilization first struck root in the Anglo-Saxon race ; and within which now, after a lapse of many centuries, a new institution has arisen, intended to carry far and wide, to countries of which Gregory and Augustine never heard, the blessings which they gave to us. Carry your view on—and there rises high above all the magnificent pile of our cathedral, equal in splendour and state to any, the noblest temple or church that Augustine could have seen in ancient Rome, rising on the very ground which derives its consecration from him. And still more than the grandeur of the outward buildings that rose from the little church of Augustine and the little palace of Ethelbert have been the institutions of all kinds of which these were the earliest cradle. From Canterbury, the first English Christian city,—from Kent, the first English Christian kingdom—has by degrees arisen the whole constitution of Church and State in England which now binds together the whole British Empire. And from the

Christianity here established in England has flowed, by direct consequence, first the Christianity of Germany; then, after a long interval, of North America; and lastly, we may trust, in time, of all India and all Australasia. The view from St. Martin's Church is indeed one of the most inspiring that can be found in the world; there is none to which I would more willingly take any one who doubted whether a small beginning could lead to a great and lasting good;—none which carries us more vividly back into the past, or more hopefully forward into the future."

To this Gregorian canticle in praise of the British constitution, I grieve, but am compelled, to take these following historical objections. The first missionary to Germany was Ulphilas, and what she owes to these islands she owes to Iona, not to Thanet. Our missionary offices to America as to Africa, consist I believe principally in the stealing of land, and the extermination of

its proprietors by intoxication. Our rule in India has introduced there, Paisley instead of Cashmere shawls : in Australasia our Christian aid supplies, I suppose, the pious farmer with convict labour. And although, when the Dean wrote the above passage, St. Augustine's and the cathedral were—I take it on trust from his description—the principal objects in the prospect from St. Martin's Hill, I believe even the cheerfullest of my audience would not now think the scene one of the most inspiring in the world. For recent progress has entirely accommodated the architecture of the scene to the convenience of the missionary workers above enumerated ; to the peculiar necessities of the civilization they have achieved. For the sake of which the cathedral, the monastery, the temple, and the tomb, of Bertha, contract themselves in distant or despised subservience under the colossal walls of the county gaol.

The
Pleasures of England.

LECTURES GIVEN IN OXFORD,

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, D.C.L., LL.D.,

IN MICHAELMAS TERM,

1884.

LECTURE II.
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LECTURE II.

(Oct. 25, 1884.)

THE PLEASURES OF FAITH.

Alfred to the Confessor.

LECTURE II.

THE PLEASURES OF FAITH.

ALFRED TO THE CONFESSOR.

I WAS forced in my last lecture to pass by altogether, and to-day can only with momentary definition notice, the part taken by Scottish missionaries in the Christianizing of England and Burgundy. I would pray you therefore, in order to fill the gap which I think it better to leave distinctly, than close confusedly, to read the histories of St. Patrick, St. Columba, and St. Columban, as they are given you by Montalembert in his 'Moines d'Occident.' You will find in his pages all the essential facts that are known, encircled with a nimbus of enthusiastic sympathy which I hope you will like better to see them through, than distorted by the

blackening fog of contemptuous rationalism. But although I ask you thus to make yourselves aware of the greatness of my omission, I must also certify you that it does not break the unity of our own immediate subject. The influence of Celtic passion and art both on Northumbria and the Continent, beneficent in all respects while it lasted, expired without any permanent share in the work or emotion of the Saxon and Frank. The book of Kells, and the bell of St. Patrick, represent sufficiently the peculiar character of Celtic design; and long since, in the first lecture of the 'Two Paths,' I explained both the modes of skill, and points of weakness, which rendered such design unprogressive. Perfect in its peculiar manner, and exulting in the faultless practice of a narrow skill, it remained century after century incapable alike of inner growth, or foreign instruction; inimitable, yet incorrigible; marvellous, yet despicable, to its death. Despicable, I mean, only in the limitation of its capacity, not in its quality

or nature. If you make a Christian of a lamb or a squirrel—what can you expect of the lamb but jumping—what of the squirrel, but pretty spirals, traced with his tail? He won't steal your nuts any more, and he'll say his prayers like this—*; but you cannot make a Beatrice's griffin, and emblem of all the Catholic Church, out of him.

You will have observed, also, that the plan of these lectures does not include any reference to the Roman Period in England; of which you will find all I think necessary to say, in the part called *Valle Crucis* of 'Our Fathers have told us.' But I must here warn you, with reference to it, of one gravely false prejudice of Montalembert. He is entirely blind to the conditions of Roman virtue, which existed in the midst of the corruptions of the Empire, forming the characters of such Emperors as Pertinax, Carus, Probus, the second Claudius, Aurelian, and our own Constantius; and he denies, with

* Making a sign.

abusive violence, the power for good, of Roman Law, over the Gauls and Britons.

Respecting Roman national character, I will simply beg you to remember, that both St. Benedict and St. Gregory are Roman patricians, before they are either monk or pope; respecting its influence on Britain, I think you may rest content with Shakespeare's estimate of it. Both Lear and Cymbeline belong to this time, so difficult to our apprehension, when the Briton accepted both Roman laws and Roman gods. There is indeed the born Kentish gentleman's protest against them in Kent's—

“Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain”;

but both Cordelia and Imogen are just as thoroughly Roman ladies, as Virgilia or Calphurnia.

Of British Christianity and the Arthurian Legends, I shall have a word or two to say in my lecture on “Fancy,” in connection

with the similar romance which surrounds Theodoric and Charlemagne: only the worst of it is, that while both Dietrich and Karl are themselves more wonderful than the legends of them, Arthur fades into intangible vision:—this much, however, remains to this day, of Arthurian blood in us, that the richest fighting element in the British army and navy is British native,—that is to say, Highlander, Irish, Welsh, and Cornish.

Content, therefore, (means being now given you for filling gaps,) with the estimates given you in the preceding lecture of the sources of instruction possessed by the Saxon capital, I pursue to-day our question originally proposed, what London might have been by this time, if the nature of the flowers, trees, and children, born at the Thames-side, had been rightly understood and cultivated.

Many of my hearers can imagine far better than I, the look that London must have had

in Alfred's and Canute's days.* I have not, indeed, the least idea myself what its buildings were like, but certainly the groups of its shipping must have been superb; small, but entirely seaworthy vessels, manned by the best seamen in the then world. Of course, now, at Chatham and Portsmouth we have our ironclads,—extremely beautiful and beautifully manageable things, no doubt—to set against this Saxon and Danish shipping; but the Saxon war-ships lay here at London shore

* Here Alfred's Silver Penny was shown and commented on, thus:—Of what London was like in the days of faith, I can show you one piece of artistic evidence. It is Alfred's silver penny struck in London mint. The character of a coinage is quite conclusive evidence in national history, and there is no great empire in progress, but tells its story in beautiful coins. Here in Alfred's penny, a round coin with L.O.N.D.I.N.I.A. struck on it, you have just the same beauty of design, the same enigmatical arrangement of letters, as in the early inscription, which it is "the pride of my life" to have discovered at Venice. This inscription ("the first words that Venice ever speaks aloud") is, it will be remembered, on the Church of St. Giacomo di Rialto, and runs, being interpreted—"Around this temple, let the merchant's law be just, his weights true, and his covenants faithful."

—bright with banner and shield and dragon prow,—instead of these you may be happier, but are not handsomer, in having, now, the coal-barge, the penny steamer, and the wherry full of shop boys and girls. I dwell however for a moment only on the naval aspect of the tidal waters in the days of Alfred, because I can refer you for all detail on this part of our subject to the wonderful opening chapter of Dean Stanley's History of Westminster Abbey, where you will find the origin of the name of London given as "The City of Ships." He does not, however, tell you, that there were built, then and there, the biggest war-ships in the world. I have often said to friends who praised my own books that I would rather have written that chapter than any one of them; yet if I *had* been able to write the historical part of it, the conclusions drawn would have been extremely different. The Dean indeed describes with a poet's joy the River of wells, which rose from those "once consecrated springs which

now lie choked in Holywell and Clerkenwell, and the rivulet of Ulebrig which crossed the Strand under the Ivy bridge"; but it is only in the spirit of a modern citizen of Belgravia that he exults in the fact that "the great arteries of our crowded streets, the vast sewers which cleanse our habitations, are fed by the life-blood of those old and living streams; that underneath our tread the Tyburn, and the Holborn, and the Fleet, and the Wall Brook, are still pursuing their ceaseless course, still ministering to the good of man, though in a far different fashion than when Druids drank of their sacred springs, and Saxons were baptized in their rushing waters, ages ago."

Whatever sympathy you may feel with these eloquent expressions of that entire complacency in the present, past, and future, which peculiarly animates Dean Stanley's writings, I must, in this case, pray you to observe that the transmutation of holy wells into sewers has, at least, destroyed the charm

and utility of the Thames as a salmon stream, and I must ask you to read with attention the succeeding portions of the chapter which record the legends of the river fisheries in their relation to the first Abbey of Westminster; dedicated by its builders to St. Peter, not merely in his office of cornerstone of the Church, nor even figuratively as a fisher of men, but directly as a fisher of fish:—and which maintained themselves, you will see, in actual ceremony down to 1382, when a fisherman still annually took his place beside the Prior, after having brought in a salmon for St. Peter, which was carried in state down the middle of the refectory.

But as I refer to this page for the exact word, my eye is caught by one of the sentences of Londonian* thought which constantly pervert the well-meant books of pious England. “We see also,” says the Dean, “the union of innocent fiction with worldly craft, which marks so many of the legends both of Pagan

* Not *Londinian*.

and Christian times." I might simply reply to this insinuation that times which have no legends differ from the legendary ones merely by uniting guilty, instead of innocent, fiction, with worldly craft; but I must farther advise you that the legends of these passionate times are in no wise, and in no sense, fiction at all; but the true record of impressions made on the minds of persons in a state of eager spiritual excitement, brought into bright focus by acting steadily and frankly under its impulses. I could tell you a great deal more about such things than you would believe, and therefore, a great deal more than it would do you the least good to hear;—but this much any who care to use their common sense modestly, cannot but admit, that unless they choose to try the rough life of the Christian ages, they cannot understand its practical consequences. You have all been taught by Lord Macaulay and his school that because you have Carpets instead of rushes for your feet; and Feather-

beds instead of fern for your backs; and Kickshaws instead of beef for your eating¹; and Drains instead of Holy Wells for your drinking;—that, therefore, you are the Cream of Creation, and every one of you a seven-headed Solomon. Stay in those pleasant circumstances and convictions if you please; but don't accuse your roughly bred and fed fathers of telling lies about the aspect the earth and sky bore to *them*,—till you have trodden the earth as they, barefoot, and seen the heavens as they, face to face. If you care to see and to know for yourselves, you may do it with little pains; you need not do any great thing, you needn't keep one eye open and the other shut for ten years over a microscope, nor fight your way through icebergs and darkness to knowledge of the *celestial* pole. Simply, do as much as king after king of the Saxons did,—put rough shoes on your feet and a rough cloak on your shoulders, and walk to Rome and back. Sleep by the

roadside, when it is fine,—in the first outhouse you can find, when it is wet; and live on bread and water, with an onion or two, all the way; and if the experiences which you will have to relate on your return do not, as may well be, deserve the name of spiritual; at all events you will not be disposed to let other people regard them either as Poetry or Fiction.

With this warning, presently to be at greater length insisted on, I trace for you, in Dean Stanley's words, which cannot be bettered except in the collection of their more earnest passages from among his interludes of graceful but dangerous qualification,—I trace, with only such omission, the story he has told us of the foundation of that Abbey, which, he tells you, was the Mother of London, and has ever been the shrine and the throne of English faith and truth.

“The gradual formation of a monastic body, indicated in the charters of Offa and Edgar, marks the spread of the Benedictine

order throughout England, under the influence of Dunstan. The 'terror' of the spot, which had still been its chief characteristic in the charter of the wild Offa, had, in the days of the more peaceful Edgar, given way to a dubious 'renown.' Twelve monks is the number traditionally said to have been established by Dunstan. A few acres further up the river formed their chief property, and their monastic character was sufficiently recognized to have given to the old locality of the 'terrible place' the name of the 'Western Monastery,' or 'Minster of the West.'"

The Benedictines then—twelve Benedictine monks — thus begin the building of existent Christian London. You know I told you the Benedictines are the Doing people, as the disciples of St. Augustine the Sentimental people. The Benedictines find no terror in their own thoughts—face the terror of places—change it into beauty of places,—make this terrible place, a Motherly Place—Mother of London.

This first Westminster, however, the Dean goes on to say, “seems to have been overrun by the Danes, and it would have had no further history but for the combination of circumstances which directed hither the notice of Edward the Confessor.

I haven’t time to read you all the combination of circumstances. The last clinching circumstance was this—

“There was in the neighbourhood of Worcester, ‘far from men in the wilderness, on the slope of a wood, in a cave deep down in the grey rock,’ a holy hermit ‘of great age, living on fruits and roots.’ One night when, after reading in the Scriptures ‘how hard are the pains of hell, and how the enduring life of Heaven is sweet and to be desired,’ he could neither sleep nor repose, St. Peter appeared to him, ‘bright and beautiful, like to a clerk,’ and warned him to tell the King that he was released from his vow; that on that very day his messengers would return from Rome;” (that is the combination of circumstances—

bringing Pope's order to build a church to release the King from his vow of pilgrimage); "that 'at Thorney, two leagues from the city,' was the spot marked out where, in an ancient church, 'situated low,' he was to establish a perfect Benedictine monastery, which should be 'the gate of heaven, the ladder of prayer, whence those who serve St. Peter there, shall by him be admitted into Paradise.' The hermit writes the account of the vision on parchment, seals it with wax, and brings it to the King, who compares it with the answer of the messengers, just arrived from Rome, and determines on carrying out the design as the Apostle had ordered.

"The ancient church, 'situated low,' indicated in this vision the one whose attached monastery had been destroyed by the Danes, but its little church remained, and was already dear to the Confessor, not only from the lovely tradition of its dedication by the spirit of St. Peter;" (you must

read that for yourselves ;) “but also because of two miracles happening there to the King himself.

“The first was the cure of a cripple, who sat in the road between the Palace and ‘the Chapel of St. Peter,’ which was ‘near,’ and who explained to the Chamberlain Hugolin that, after six pilgrimages to Rome in vain, St. Peter had promised his cure if the King would, on his own royal neck, carry him to the Monastery. The King immediately consented; and, amidst the scoffs of the court, bore the poor man to the steps of the High Altar. There the cripple was received by Godric the sacristan, and walked away on his own restored feet, hanging his stool on the wall for a trophy.

“Before that same High Altar was also believed to have been seen one of the Eucharistical portents, so frequent in the Middle Ages. A child, ‘pure and bright like a spirit,’ appeared to the King in the sacramental elements. Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who, with

his famous countess, Godiva, was present, saw it also.

“Such as these were the motives of Edward. Under their influence was fixed what has ever since been the local centre of the English monarchy.”

“Such as these were the *motives* of Edward,” says the Dean. Yes, certainly; but such as these also, first, were the acts and visions of Edward. Take care that you don’t slip away, by the help of the glycerine of the word “motives,” into fancying that all these tales are only the after colours and pictorial metaphors of sentimental piety. They are either plain truth or black lies; take your choice,—but don’t tickle and treat yourselves with the prettiness or the grotesqueness of them, as if they were Anderssen’s fairy tales. Either the King did carry the beggar on his back, or he didn’t; either Godiva rode through Coventry, or she didn’t; either the Earl Leofric saw the vision of the bright child at the altar—or he lied like

a knave. Judge, as you will; but do not Doubt.

“The Abbey was fifteen years in building. The King spent upon it one-tenth of the property of the kingdom. It was to be a marvel of its kind. As in its origin it bore the traces of the fantastic and childish” (I must pause, to ask you to substitute for these blameful terms, ‘fantastic and childish,’ the better ones of ‘imaginative and pure’) “character of the King and of the age; in its architecture it bore the stamp of the peculiar position which Edward occupied in English history between Saxon and Norman. By birth he was a Saxon, but in all else he was a foreigner. Accordingly the Church at Westminster was a wide-sweeping innovation on all that had been seen before. ‘Destroying the old building,’ he says in his charter, ‘I have built up a new one from the very foundation.’ Its fame as a ‘new style of composition’ lingered in the minds of men for generations. It was the first cruciform church in England, from which

all the rest of like shape were copied—an expression of the increasing hold which, in the tenth century, the idea of the Crucifixion had laid on the imagination of Europe. The massive roof and pillars formed a contrast with the rude wooden rafters and beams of the common Saxon churches. Its very size—occupying, as it did, almost the whole area of the present building—was in itself portentous. The deep foundations, of large square blocks of grey stone, were duly laid; the east end was rounded into an apse; a tower rose in the centre, crowned by a cupola of wood. At the western end were erected two smaller towers, with five large bells. The hard strong stones were richly sculptured; the windows were filled with stained glass; the roof was covered with lead. The cloisters, chapter-house, refectory, dormitory, the infirmary, with its spacious chapel, if not completed by Edward, were all begun, and finished in the next generation on the same plan. This structure, venerable as it would be if it

had lasted to our time, has almost entirely vanished. Possibly one vast dark arch in the southern transept, certainly the substructures of the dormitory, with their huge pillars, 'grand and regal at the bases and capitals,' the massive, low-browed passage leading from the great cloister to Little Dean's Yard, and some portions of the refectory and of the infirmary chapel, remain as specimens of the work which astonished the last age of the Anglo-Saxon and the first age of the Norman monarchy."

Hitherto I have read to you with only supplemental comment. But in the next following passage, with which I close my series of extracts, sentence after sentence occurs, at which as I read, I must raise my hand, to mark it for following deprecation, or denial.

"In the centre of Westminster Abbey thus lies its Founder, and such is the story of its foundation. Even apart from the legendary elements in which it is involved, it is impos-

sible not to be struck by the fantastic character of all its circumstances. We seem to be in a world of poetry." (I protest, No.) "Edward is four centuries later than Ethelbert and Augustine; but the origin of Canterbury is commonplace and prosaic compared with the origin of Westminster." (Yes, that's true.) "We can hardly imagine a figure more incongruous to the soberness of later times than the quaint, irresolute, wayward prince whose chief characteristics have just been described. His titles of Confessor and Saint belong not to the general instincts of Christendom; but to the most transitory feelings of the age." (I protest, No.) "His opinions, his prevailing motives, were such as in no part of modern Europe would now be shared by any educated teacher or ruler." (That's true enough.) "But in spite of these irreconcilable differences, there was a solid ground for the charm which he exercised over his contemporaries. His childish and eccentric fancies have passed away;" (I

protest, No;) “but his innocent faith and his sympathy with his people are qualities which, even in our altered times, may still retain their place in the economy of the world. Westminster Abbey, so we hear it said, sometimes with a cynical sneer, sometimes with a timorous scruple, has admitted within its walls many who have been great without being good, noble with a nobleness of the earth earthy, worldly with the wisdom of this world. But it is a counterbalancing reflection, that the central tomb, round which all those famous names have clustered, contains the ashes of one who, weak and erring as he was, rests his claims of interment here, not on any act of power or fame, but only on his artless piety and simple goodness. He, towards whose dust was attracted the fierce Norman, and the proud Plantagenet, and the grasping Tudor, and the fickle Stuart, even the Independent Oliver, the Dutch William, and the Hanoverian George, was one whose humble graces are within the

reach of every man, woman, and child of every time, if we rightly part the immortal substance from the perishable form."

Now I have read you these passages from Dean Stanley as the most accurately investigatory, the most generously sympathetic, the most reverently acceptant account of these days, and their people, which you can yet find in any English history. But consider now, point by point, where it leaves you. You are told, first, that you are living in an age of poetry. But the days of poetry are those of Shakespeare and Milton, not of Bede: nay, for their especial wealth in melodious theology and beautifully rhythmic and pathetic meditation, perhaps the days which have given us 'Hiawatha,' 'In Memoriam,' 'The Christian Year,' and the 'Soul's Diary' of George Macdonald, may be not with disgrace compared with those of Caedmon. And nothing can be farther different from the temper, nothing less conscious of the effort, of a poet, than any finally authentic

document to which you can be referred for the relation of a Saxon miracle.

I will read you, for a perfectly typical example, an account of one from Bede's 'Life of St. Cuthbert.' The passage is a favourite one of my own, but I do not in the least anticipate its producing upon you the solemnizing effect which I think I could command from reading, instead, a piece of 'Marmion,' 'Manfred,' or 'Childe Harold.'

. . . "He had one day left his cell to give advice to some visitors; and when he had finished, he said to them, 'I must now go in again, but do you, as you are inclined to depart, first take food; and when you have cooked and eaten that goose which is hanging on the wall, go on board your vessel in God's name and return home.' He then uttered a prayer, and, having blessed them, went in. But they, as he had bidden them, took some food; but having enough provisions of their own, which they had

brought with them, they did not touch the goose.

“But when they had refreshed themselves they tried to go on board their vessel, but a sudden storm utterly prevented them from putting to sea. They were thus detained seven days in the island by the roughness of the waves, and yet they could not call to mind what fault they had committed. They therefore returned to have an interview with the holy father, and to lament to him their detention. He exhorted them to be patient, and on the seventh day came out to console their sorrow, and to give them pious exhortations. When, however, he had entered the house in which they were stopping, and saw that the goose was not eaten, he reproved their disobedience with mild countenance and in gentle language: ‘Have you not left the goose still hanging in its place? What wonder is it that the storm has prevented your departure? Put it immediately into the caldron, and boil and eat it, that the sea

may become tranquil, and you may return home.'

"They immediately did as he commanded; and it happened most wonderfully that the moment the kettle began to boil the wind began to cease, and the waves to be still. Having finished their repast, and seeing that the sea was calm, they went on board, and to their great delight, though with shame for their neglect, reached home with a fair wind. Now this, as I have related, I did not pick up from any chance authority, but I had it from one of those who were present, a most reverend monk and priest of the same monastery, Cynemund, who still lives, known to many in the neighbourhood for his years and the purity of his life."

I hope that the memory of this story, which, thinking it myself an extremely pretty one, I have given you, not only for a type of sincerity and simplicity, but for an illustration of obedience, may at all events quit you, for

good and all, of the notion that the believers and witnesses of miracle were poetical persons. Saying no more on the head of that allegation, I proceed to the Dean's second one, which I cannot but interpret as also intended to be injurious,—that they were artless and childish ones; and that because of this rudeness and puerility, their motives and opinions would not be shared by any statesmen of the present day.

It is perfectly true that Edward the Confessor was himself in many respects of really childish temperament; not therefore, perhaps, as I before suggested to you, less venerable. But the age of which we are examining the progress, was by no means represented or governed by men of similar disposition. It was eminently productive of—it was altogether governed, guided, and instructed by—men of the widest and most brilliant faculties, whether constructive or speculative, that the world till then had seen; men whose acts became the romance,

whose thoughts the wisdom, and whose arts the treasure, of a thousand years of futurity.

I warned you at the close of last lecture against the too agreeable vanity of supposing that the Evangelization of the world began at St. Martin's, Canterbury. Again and again you will indeed find the stream of the Gospel contracting itself into narrow channels, and appearing, after long-concealed filtration, through veins of unmeasured rock, with the bright resilience of a mountain spring. But you will find it the only candid, and therefore the only wise, way of research, to look in each era of Christendom for the minds of culminating power in all its brotherhood of nations; and, careless of local impulse, momentary zeal, picturesque incident, or vaunted miracle, to fasten your attention upon the force of character in the men, whom, over each newly-converted race, Heaven visibly sets for its shepherds and kings, to bring forth judgment unto victory. Of these I will name to you, as messengers

of God and masters of men, five monks and five kings; in whose arms during the range of swiftly gainful centuries which we are following, the life of the world lay as a nursling babe. Remember, in their successive order,—of monks, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Martin, St. Benedict, and St. Gregory; of kings,—and your national vanity may be surely enough appeased in recognizing two of them for Saxon,—Theodoric, Charlemagne, Alfred, Canute, and the Confessor. I will read three passages to you, out of the literal words of three of these ten men, without saying whose they are, that you may compare them with the best and most exalted you have read expressing the philosophy, the religion, and the policy of to-day,—from which I admit, with Dean Stanley, but with a far different meaning from his, that they are indeed separate for evermore.

I give you first, for an example of Philosophy, a single sentence, containing all—so far as I can myself discern—that it is

possible for us to know, or well for us to believe, respecting the world and its laws.

“Of God’s universal Providence, ruling all,
and comprising all.

“Wherefore the great and mighty God ;
He that made man a reasonable creature of
soul and body, and He that did neither let
him pass unpunished for his sin, nor yet
excluded him from mercy ; He that gave,
both unto good and bad, essence with the
stones, power of production with the trees,
senses with the beasts of the field, and
understanding with the angels ; He from
whom is all being, beauty, form, and order,
number, weight, and measure ; He from
whom all nature, mean and excellent, all
seeds of form, all forms of seed, all motion,
both of forms and seeds, derive and have
being ; He that gave flesh the original beauty,
strength, propagation, form and shape, health
and symmetry ; He that gave the unreason-
able soul, sense, memory, and appetite ; the

reasonable, besides these, phantasy, understanding, and will; He, I say, having left neither heaven, nor earth, nor angel, nor man, no, nor the most base and contemptible creature, neither the bird's feather, nor the herb's flower, nor the tree's leaf, without the true harmony of their parts, and peaceful concord of composition:—It is in no way credible that He would leave the kingdoms of men and their bondages and freedom loose and uncompromised in the laws of His eternal providence.”*

This for the philosophy.† Next, I take for example of the Religion of our ancestors, a prayer, personally and passionately offered to the Deity conceived as you have this moment heard.

“O Thou who art the Father of that Son which has awakened us, and yet urgeth us out of the sleep of our sins, and exhorteth

* From St. Augustine's 'City of God,' Book V., ch. xi. (English trans., printed by George Eld, 1610.)

† Here one of the “Stones of Westminster” was shown and commented on.

us that we become Thine;" (note you that, for apprehension of what Redemption means, against your base and cowardly modern notion of 'scaping whipping. Not to take away the Punishment of Sin, but by His Resurrection to raise us out of the sleep of sin itself! Compare the legend at the feet of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah in the golden Gospel of Charles le Chauve* :—

“ HIC LEO SURGENDO PORTAS CONFREGIT AVERNI
QUI NUNQUAM DORMIT, NUSQUAM DORMITAT IN
ÆVUM ; ”)

“ to Thee, Lord, I pray, who art the supreme truth ; for all the truth that is, is truth from Thee. Thee I implore, O Lord, who art the highest wisdom. Through Thee are wise all those that are so. Thou art the true life, and through Thee are living all those that are so. Thou art the supreme

* At Munich : the leaf has been exquisitely drawn and legend communicated to me by Professor Westwood. It is written in gold on purple.

felicity, and from Thee all have become happy that are so. Thou art the highest good, and from Thee all beauty springs. Thou art the intellectual light, and from Thee man derives his understanding.

“To Thee, O God, I call and speak. Hear, O hear me, Lord! for Thou art my God and my Lord; my Father and my Creator; my ruler and my hope; my wealth and my honour; my house, my country, my salvation, and my life! Hear, hear me, O Lord! Few of Thy servants comprehend Thee. But Thee alone I *love*,* indeed, above all other things. Thee I seek: Thee I will follow: Thee I am ready to serve. Under Thy power I desire to abide, for Thou alone art the Sovereign of all. I pray Thee to command me as Thou wilt.”

You see this prayer is simply the expansion of that clause of the Lord's Prayer which most men eagerly omit from it,—*Fiat volun-*

* Meaning—not that he is of those few, but that, without comprehending, at least, as a dog, he can love.

tas tua. In being so, it sums the Christian prayer of all ages. See now, in the third place, how far this king's letter I am going to read to you sums also Christian Policy.

“Wherefore I render high thanks to Almighty God, for the happy accomplishment of all the desires which I have set before me, and for the satisfying of my every wish.

“Now therefore, be it known to you all, that to Almighty God Himself I have, on my knees, devoted my life, to the end that in all things I may do justice, and with justice and rightness rule the kingdoms and peoples under me; throughout everything preserving an impartial judgment. If, heretofore, I have, through being, as young men are, impulsive or careless, done anything unjust, I mean, with God's help, to lose no time in remedying my fault. To which end I call to witness my counselors, to whom I have entrusted the counsels of the kingdom, and I charge them that by no

means, be it through fear of me, or the favour of any other powerful personage, to consent to any injustice, or to suffer any to shoot out in any part of my kingdom. I charge all my viscounts and those set over my whole kingdom, as they wish to keep my friendship or their own safety, to use no unjust force to any man, rich or poor; let all men, noble and not noble, rich and poor alike, be able to obtain their rights under the law's justice; and from that law let there be no deviation, either to favour the king or any powerful person, nor to raise money for me. I have no need of money raised by what is unfair. I also would have you know that I go now to make peace and firm treaty by the counsels of all my subjects, with those nations and people who wished, had it been possible for them to do so, which it was not, to deprive us alike of kingdom and of life. God brought down their strength to nought: and may He of His benign love preserve us on our throne and in honour. Lastly, when I

have made peace with the neighbouring nations, and settled and pacified all my dominions in the East, so that we may nowhere have any war or enmity to fear, I mean to come to England this summer, as soon as I can fit out vessels to sail. My reason, however, in sending this letter first is to let all the people of my kingdom share in the joy of my welfare: for as you yourselves know, I have never spared myself or my labour; nor will I ever do so, where my people are really in want of some good that I can do them."

What think you now, in candour and honour, you youth of the latter days,—what think you of these types of the thought, devotion, and government, which not in words, but pregnant and perpetual fact, animated these which you have been accustomed to call the Dark Ages?

The Philosophy is Augustine's; the Prayer Alfred's; and the Letter Canute's.

And, whatever you may feel respecting the

beauty or wisdom of these sayings, be assured of one thing above all, that they are sincere; and of another, less often observed, that they are joyful.

Be assured, in the first place, that they are sincere. The ideas of diplomacy and priestcraft are of recent times. No false knight or lying priest ever prospered, I believe, in any age, but certainly not in the dark ones. Men prospered then, only in following openly-declared purposes, and preaching candidly beloved and trusted creeds.

And that they did so prosper, in the degree in which they accepted and proclaimed the Christian Gospel, may be seen by any of you in your historical reading, however partial, if only you will admit the idea that it could be so, and was likely to be so. You are all of you in the habit of supposing that temporal prosperity is owing either to worldly chance or to worldly prudence; and is never granted in any visible relation to states of religious temper. Put that treacherous

doubt away from you, with disdain; take for basis of reasoning the noble postulate, that the elements of Christian faith are sound,—instead of the base one, that they are deceptive; reread the great story of the world in that light, and see what a vividly real, yet miraculous tenor, it will then bear to you.

Their faith then, I tell you first, was sincere; I tell you secondly that it was, in a degree few of us can now conceive, joyful. We continually hear of the trials, sometimes of the victories, of Faith,—but scarcely ever of its pleasures. Whereas, at this time, you will find that the chief delight of all good men was in the recognition of the goodness and wisdom of the Master, who had come to dwell with them upon earth. It is almost impossible for you to conceive the vividness of this sense in them; it is totally impossible for you to conceive the comfort, peace, and force of it. In everything that you now do or seek, you expose yourselves to countless miseries of shame and disappointment, because

in your doing you depend on nothing but your own powers, and in seeking choose only your own gratification. You cannot for the most part conceive of any work but for your own interests, or the interests of others about whom you are anxious in the same faithless way; everything about which passion is excited in you or skill exerted is some object of material life, and the idea of doing anything except for your own praise or profit has narrowed itself into little more than the precentor's invitation to the company with little voice and less practice to "sing to the praise and glory of God."

I have said that you cannot imagine the feeling of the energy of daily life applied in the real meaning of those words. You cannot imagine it, but you *can* prove it. Are any of you willing, simply as a philosophical experiment in the greatest of sciences, to adopt the principles and feelings of these men of a thousand years ago for a given time, say for a year? It cannot possibly

do you any harm to try, and you cannot possibly learn what is true in these things, without trying. If after a year's experience of such method you find yourself no happier than before, at least you will be able to support your present opinions at once with more grace and more modesty; having conceded the trial it asked for, to the opposite side. Nor in acting temporarily on a faith you do not see to be reasonable, do you compromise your own integrity more, than in conducting, under a chemist's directions, an experiment of which he foretells inexplicable consequences. And you need not doubt the power you possess over your own minds to do this. Were faith not voluntary, it could not be praised, and would not be rewarded.

If you are minded thus to try, begin each day with Alfred's prayer,—*fiat voluntas tua*; resolving that you will stand to it, and that nothing that happens in the course of the day shall displease you. Then set to any work

you have in hand with the sifted and purified resolution that ambition shall not mix with it, nor love of gain, nor desire of pleasure more than is appointed for you; and that no anxiety shall touch you as to its issue, nor any impatience nor regret if it fail. Imagine that the thing is being done through you, not by you; that the good of it may never be known, but that at least, unless by your rebellion or foolishness, there can come no evil into it, nor wrong chance to it. Resolve also with steady industry to do what you can for the help of your country and its honour, and the honour of its God; and that you will not join hands in its iniquity, nor turn aside from its misery; and that in all you do and feel you will look frankly for the immediate help and direction, and to your own consciences, expressed approval, of God. Live thus, and believe, and with swiftness of answer proportioned to the frankness of the trust, most surely the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

But, if you will not do this, if you have not courage nor heart enough to break away the fetters of earth, and take up the sensual bed of it, and walk; if you say that you are *bound* to win this thing, and become the other thing, and that the wishes of your friends,—and the interests of your family,—and the bias of your genius,—and the expectations of your college,—and all the rest of the bow-wow-wow of the wild dog-world, must be attended to, whether you like it or no,—then, at least, for shame give up talk about being free or independent creatures; recognize yourselves for slaves in whom the thoughts are put in ward with their bodies, and their hearts manacled with their hands: and then at least also, for shame, if you refuse to believe that ever there were men who gave their souls to God,—know and confess how surely there are those who sell them to His adversary.

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Pleasures of England.

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IN MICHAELMAS TERM,

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Alfred to Cœur de Lion.

LECTURE III.

THE PLEASURES OF DEED.

ALFRED TO CŒUR DE LION.

IT was my endeavour, in the preceding lecture, to vindicate the thoughts and arts of our Saxon ancestors from whatever scorn might lie couched under the terms applied to them by Dean Stanley,—‘fantastic,’ and ‘childish.’ To-day my task must be carried forward, first, in asserting the grace in fantasy, and the force in infancy, of the English mind, before the Conquest, against the allegations contained in the final passage of Dean Stanley’s description of the first founded Westminster; a passage which accepts and asserts, more distinctly than any other equally brief statement I have met with, the to my mind extremely disputable theory, that the Norman invasion was in

every respect a sanitary, moral, and intellectual blessing to England, and that the arrow which slew her Harold was indeed the Arrow of the Lord's deliverance.

"The Abbey itself," says Dean Stanley,—"the chief work of the Confessor's life,—was the portent of the mighty future. When Harold stood beside his sister Edith, on the day of the dedication, and signed his name with hers as witness to the Charter of the Abbey, he might have seen that he was sealing his own doom, and preparing for his own destruction. The solid pillars, the ponderous arches, the huge edifice, with triple tower and sculptured stones and storied windows, that arose in the place and in the midst of the humble wooden churches and wattled tenements of the Saxon period, might have warned the nobles who were present that the days of their rule were numbered, and that the *avenging, civilizing, stimulating* hand of another and a mightier race was at work, which would change the

whole face of their language, their manners, their Church, and their commonwealth. The Abbey, so far exceeding the demands of the *dull and stagnant* minds of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, was founded not only in faith, but in hope: in the hope that England had yet a glorious career to run; that the line of her sovereigns would not be broken, even when the race of Alfred had ceased to reign."

There must surely be some among my hearers who are startled, if not offended, at being told in the terms which I emphasized in this sentence, that the minds of our Saxon fathers were, although fantastic, dull, and, although childish, stagnant; that farther, in their fantastic stagnation, they were savage, —and in their innocent dullness, criminal; so that the future character and fortune of the race depended on the critical advent of the didactic and disciplinarian Norman baron, at once to polish them, stimulate, and chastise.

Before I venture to say a word in distinct

arrest of this judgment, I will give you a chart, as clear as the facts observed in the two previous lectures allow, of the state and prospects of the Saxons, when this violent benediction of conquest happened to them: and especially I would rescue, in the measure that justice bids, the memory even of their Pagan religion from the general scorn in which I used Carlyle's description of the idol of ancient Prussia as universally exponent of the temper of Northern devotion. That Triglyph, or Triglyph Idol, (derivation of Triglyph wholly unknown to me—I use Triglyph only for my own handiest epithet), last set up, on what is now St. Mary's hill in Brandenburg, in 1023, belonged indeed to a people wonderfully like the Saxons,—geographically their close neighbours,—in habits of life, and aspect of native land, scarcely distinguishable from them,—in Carlyle's words, a “strong-boned, iracund, herdsman and fisher people, highly averse to be interfered with, in their religion especially, and inhabiting a

moory flat country, full of lakes and woods, but with plenty also of alluvial mud, grassy, frugiferous, apt for the plough"—in all things like the Saxons, except, as I read the matter, in that 'aversion to be interfered with' which you modern English think an especially Saxon character in you,—but which is, on the contrary, you will find on examination, by no means Saxon; but only Wendisch, Czech, Serbic, Sclavic,—other hard names I could easily find for it among the tribes of that vehemently heathen old Preussen—"resolutely worshipful of places of oak trees, of wooden or stone idols, of Bangputtis, Patkullos, and I know not what diabolic dumb blocks." Your English "dislike to be interfered with" is in absolute fellowship with these, but only gathers itself in its places of Stalks, or chimneys, instead of oak trees, round its idols of iron, instead of wood, diabolically *vocal* now; strident, and sibilant, instead of dumb.

Far other than these, their neighbour

Saxons, Jutes and Angles!—tribes between whom the distinctions are of no moment whatsoever, except that an English boy or girl may with grace remember that ‘Old England,’ exactly and strictly so called, was the small district in the extreme south of Denmark, totally with its islands estimable at sixty miles square of dead flat land. Directly south of it, the definitely so-called Saxons held the western shore of Holstein, with the estuary of the Elbe, and the sea-mark isle, Heligoland. But since the principal temple of Saxon worship was close to Leipsic,* we may include under our general term, Saxons, the inhabitants of the whole level district of North Germany, from the Gulf of Flensburg to the Hartz; and, eastward, all the country watered by the Elbe as far as Saxon Switzerland.

Of the character of this race I will not here speak at any length: only note of it this essential point, that their religion was

* Turner, vol. i., p. 223.

at once more practical and more imaginative than that of the Norwegian peninsula; the Norse religion being the conception rather of natural than moral powers, but the Saxon, primarily of moral, as the lords of natural—their central divine image, Irminsul,* holding the standard of peace in her right hand, a balance in her left. Such a religion may degenerate into mere slaughter and rapine; but it has the making in it of the noblest men.

More practical at all events, whether for good or evil, in this trust in a future reward for courage and purity, than the mere Scandinavian awe of existing Earth and Cloud, the Saxon religion was also more imaginative, in its nearer conception of human feeling in divine creatures. And when this wide hope and high reverence had distinct objects of worship and prayer, offered to them by Christianity, the Saxons easily became pure, passionate, and thoughtful Christians; while the

* Properly plural 'Images'—Irminsul and Irminsula.

Normans, to the last, had the greatest difficulty in apprehending the Christian teaching of the Franks, and still deny the power of Christianity, even when they have become inveterate in its form.

Quite the deepest-thoughted creatures of the then animate world, it seems to me, these Saxon ploughmen of the sand or the sea, with their worshipped deity of Beauty and Justice, a red rose on her banner, for best of gifts, and in her right hand, instead of a sword, a balance, for due doom, without wrath,—of retribution in her left. Far other than the Wends, though stubborn enough, they too, in battle rank,—seven times rising from defeat against Charlemagne, and unsubdued but by death—yet, by no means in that John Bull's manner of yours, 'averse to be interfered with,' in their opinions, or their religion. Eagerly docile on the contrary—joyfully reverent—instantly and gratefully acceptant of whatever better insight or oversight a stranger could bring them, of the things of God or man.

And let me here ask you especially to take account of that origin of the true bearing of the Flag of England, the Red Rose. Her own madness defiled afterwards alike the white and red, into images of the paleness, or the crimson, of death; but the Saxon Rose was the symbol of heavenly beauty and peace.

I told you in my first lecture that one swift requirement in our school would be to produce a beautiful map of England, including old Northumberland, giving the whole country, in its real geography, between the Frith of Forth and Straits of Dover, and with only six sites of habitation given, besides those of Edinburgh and London,—namely, those of Canterbury and Winchester, York and Lancaster, Holy Island and Melrose; the latter instead of Iona, because, as we have seen, the influence of St. Columba expires with the advance of Christianity, while that of Cuthbert of Melrose connects itself with the most sacred feelings of the entire Northumbrian kingdom, and Scottish

border, down to the days of Scott—wreathing also into its circle many of the legends of Arthur. Will you forgive my connecting the personal memory of having once had a wild rose gathered for me, in the glen of Thomas the Rhymer, by the daughter of one of the few remaining Catholic houses of Scotland, with the pleasure I have in reading to you this following true account of the origin of the name of St. Cuthbert's birth-place;—the rather because I owe it to friendship of the same date, with Mr. Cockburn Muir, of Melrose.

“To those who have eyes to read it,” says Mr. Muir, “the name ‘Melrose’ is written full and fair, on the fair face of all this reach of the valley. The name is anciently spelt Mailros, and later, Malros, never Mulros; (‘Mul’ being the Celtic word taken to mean ‘bare’). Ros is Rose; the forms Meal or Mol imply great quantity or number. Thus Malros means the place of many roses.

“This is precisely the notable character-

istic of the neighbourhood. The wild rose is indigenous. There is no nook nor cranny, no bank nor brae, which is not, in the time of roses, ablaze with their exuberant loveliness. In gardens, the cultured rose is so prolific that it spreads literally like a weed. But it is worth suggestion that the word may be of the same stock as the Hebrew *rôsh* (translated *rôs* by the Septuagint), meaning *chief*, *principal*, while it is also the name of *some* flower; but of *which* flower is now unknown. Affinities of *rôsh* are not far to seek; Sanskrit, *Raj(a)*. *Ra(ja)ni*; Latin, *Rex*, *Reg(ina)*.”

I leave it to Professor Max Muller to certify or correct for you the details of Mr. Cockburn’s research,*—this main head of

* I had not time to quote it fully in the lecture; and in my ignorance, alike of Keltic and Hebrew, can only submit it here to the reader’s examination. “The ancient Cognizance of the town confirms this etymology beyond doubt, with customary heraldic precision. The shield bears a *Rose*; with a *Maul*, as the exact phonetic equivalent for the expletive. If the herald had needed to express ‘bare promontory,’ quite certainly he would have managed it somehow. Not only this, the Earls of Haddington were first created Earls of *Melrose* (1619); and

it I can positively confirm, that in old Scotch,—that of Bishop Douglas,—the word ‘Rois’ stands alike for King, and Rose.

Summing now the features I have too shortly specified in the Saxon character,—its imagination, its docility, its love of knowledge, and its love of beauty, you will be prepared to accept my conclusive statement, that they gave rise to a form of Christian faith which appears to me, in the present state of my knowledge, one of the purest and most intellectual ever attained in Christendom;—never

their Shield, quarterly, is charged, for Melrose, in 2nd and 3rd (fesse wavy between) three *Roses* gu.

“Beyond this ground of certainty, we may indulge in a little excursus into lingual affinities of wide range. The root *mol* is clear enough. It is of the same stock as the Greek *mála*, Latin *mul(tum)*, and Hebrew *m’la*. But, *Rose*? We call her Queen of Flowers, and since before the Persian poets made much of her, she was everywhere *Regina Florum*. Why should not the name mean simply the Queen, the Chief? Now, so few who know Keltic know also Hebrew, and so few who know Hebrew know also Keltic, that few know the surprising extent of the affinity that exists—clear as day—between the Keltic and the Hebrew vocabularies. That the word *Rose* may be a case in point is not hazardously speculative.”

yet understood, partly because of the extreme rudeness of its expression in the art of manuscripts, and partly because, on account of its very purity, it sought no expression in architecture, being a religion of daily life, and humble lodging. For these two practical reasons, first ;—and for this more weighty third, that the intellectual character of it is at the same time most truly, as Dean Stanley told you, childlike ; showing itself in swiftness of imaginative apprehension, and in the fearlessly candid application of great principles to small things. Its character in this kind may be instantly felt by any sympathetic and gentle person who will read carefully the book I have already quoted to you, the Venerable Bede's life of St. Cuthbert ; and the intensity and sincerity of it in the highest orders of the laity, by simply counting the members of Saxon Royal families who ended their lives in monasteries.

Now, at the very moment when this faith, innocence, and ingenuity were on the

point of springing up into their fruitage, comes the Northern invasion; of the real character of which you can gain a far truer estimate by studying Alfred's former resolute contest with and victory over the native Norman in his paganism, than by your utmost endeavours to conceive the character of the afterwards invading Norman, disguised, but not changed, by Christianity. The Norman could not, in the nature of him, become a *Christian* at all; and he never did;—he only became, at his best, the enemy of the Saracen. What he was, and what alone he was capable of being, I will try to-day to explain.

And here I must advise you that in all points of history relating to the period between 800 and 1200, you will find M. Viollet le Duc, incidentally throughout his 'Dictionary of Architecture,' the best-informed, most intelligent, and most thoughtful of guides. His knowledge of architecture, carried down into the most minutely practical details,—

(which are often the most significant), and embracing, over the entire surface of France, the buildings even of the most secluded villages; his artistic enthusiasm, balanced by the acutest sagacity, and his patriotism, by the frankest candour, render his analysis of history during that active and constructive period the most valuable known to me, and certainly, in its field, exhaustive. Of the later nationality his account is imperfect, owing to his professional interest in the mere *science* of architecture, and comparative insensibility to the power of sculpture;—but of the time with which we are now concerned, whatever he tells you must be regarded with grateful attention.

I introduce, therefore, the Normans to you, on their first entering France, under his descriptive terms of them.*

“As soon as they were established on the soil, these barbarians became the most hardy and active builders. Within the space

* Article “Architecture,” vol. i., p. 138.

of a century and a half, they had covered the country on which they had definitely landed, with religious, monastic, and civil edifices, of an extent and richness then little common. It is difficult to suppose that they had brought from Norway the elements of art,* but they were possessed by a persisting and penetrating spirit; their brutal force did not want for grandeur. Conquerors, they raised castles to assure their domination; they soon recognized the Moral force of the clergy, and endowed it richly. Eager always to attain their end, when once they saw it, they *never left one of their enterprises unfinished*, and in that they differed completely from the Southern inhabitants of Gaul. Tenacious extremely, they were perhaps the only ones among the barbarians established in France who had ideas of order; the only ones who knew how to preserve their conquests, and compose a state. They found

* They *had* brought some, of a variously Charybdic, Serpentine, and Diabolic character.—J. R.

the remains of the Carthaginian arts on the territory where they planted themselves, they mingled with those their national genius, positive, grand, and yet supple."

Supple, 'Delié,'—capable of change and play of the mental muscle, in the way that savages are not. I do not, myself, grant this suppleness to the Norman, the less because another sentence of M. le Duc's, occurring incidentally in his account of the archivolt, is of extreme counter-significance, and wide application. "The Norman arch," he says, "is *never derived from traditional classic forms*, but only from mathematical arrangement of line." Yes; that is true: the Norman arch is never derived from classic forms. The cathedral,* whose aisles you saw or might have seen, yesterday, interpenetrated with light, whose vaults you might have heard prolonging the sweet divisions of majestic sound, would have been built in that stately symmetry by Norman law, though never an

* Of Oxford, during the afternoon service.

arch at Rome had risen round her field of blood,—though never her Sublician bridge had been petrified by her Augustan pontifices. But the *decoration*, though not the structure of those arches, they owed to another race,* whose words they stole without understanding, though three centuries before, the Saxon understood, and used, to express the most solemn majesty of his Kingdom,—

“EGO EDGAR, TOTIVS ALBIONIS”—

not Rex, that would have meant the King of Kent or Mercia, not of England,—no, nor Imperator; that would have meant only the profane power of Rome, but *BASILEVS*, meaning a King who reigned with sacred authority given by Heaven and Christ.

With far meaner thoughts, both of themselves and their powers, the Normans set themselves to build impregnable military walls, and sublime religious ones, in the best

* See the concluding section of the lecture.

possible practical ways; but they no more made books of their church fronts than of their bastion flanks; and cared, in the religion they accepted, neither for its sentiments nor its promises, but only for its immediate results on national order.

As I read them, they were men wholly of this world, bent on doing the most in it, and making the best of it that they could;—men, to their death, of *Deed*, never pausing, changing, repenting, or anticipating, more than the completed square, *ἀνευ ψογού*, of their battle, their keep, and their cloister. Soldiers before and after everything, they learned the lockings and bracings of their stones primarily in defence against the battering-ram and the projectile, and esteemed the pure circular arch for its distributed and equal strength more than for its beauty. “I believe again,” says M. le Duc,* “that the feudal castle never arrived at its perfectness till after the Norman invasion, and that this race of the

* Article “Château,” vol. iii., p. 65.

North was the first to apply a defensive system under unquestionable laws, soon followed by the nobles of the Continent, after they had, at their own expense, learned their superiority."

The next sentence is a curious one. I pray your attention to it. "The defensive system of the Norman is born of a profound sentiment of *distrust* and *cunning*, *foreign to the character of the Frank.*" You will find in all my previous notices of the French, continual insistence upon their natural Franchise, and also, if you take the least pains in analysis of their literature down to this day, that the idea of falseness is to them indeed more hateful than to any other European nation. To take a quite cardinal instance. If you compare Lucian's and Shakespeare's Timon with Molière's Alceste, you will find the Greek and English misanthropes dwell only on men's *ingratitude* to *themselves*, but Alceste, on their *falsehood* to *each other*.

Now hear M. le Duc farther :

“The castles built between the tenth and twelfth centuries along the Loire, Gironde, and Seine, that is to say, along the lines of the Norman invasions, and in the neighbourhood of their possessions, have a peculiar and uniform character which one finds neither in central France, nor in Burgundy, nor can there be any need for us to throw light on (*faire ressortir*) the superiority of the warrior spirit of the Normans, during the later times of the Carlovingian epoch, over the spirit of the chiefs of Frank descent, established on the Gallo-Roman soil.” There’s a bit of honesty in a Frenchman for you !

I have just said that they valued religion chiefly for its influence of order in the present world : being in this, observe, as nearly as may be the exact reverse of modern believers, or persons who profess to be such, —of whom it may be generally alleged, too truly, that they value religion with respect to their future bliss rather than their present

duty ; and are therefore continually careless of its direct commands, with easy excuse to themselves for disobedience to them. Whereas the Norman, finding in his own heart an irresistible impulse to action, and perceiving himself to be set, with entirely strong body, brain, and will, in the midst of a weak and dissolute confusion of all things, takes from the Bible instantly into his conscience every exhortation to Do and to Govern ; and becomes, with all his might and understanding, a blunt and rough servant, knecht, or knight of God, liable to much misapprehension, of course, as to the services immediately required of him, but supposing, since the whole make of him, outside and in, is a soldier's, that God meant him for a soldier, and that he is to establish, by main force, the Christian faith and works all over the world so far as he comprehends them ; not merely with the Mahometan indignation against spiritual error, but with a sound and honest soul's dislike of material error, and

resolution to extinguish *that*, even if perchance found in the spiritual persons to whom, in their office, he yet rendered total reverence.

Which force and faith in him I may best illustrate by merely putting together the broken paragraphs of Sismondi's account of the founding of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily: virtually contemporary with the conquest of England.

“The Normans surpassed all the races of the west in their ardour for pilgrimages. They would not, to go into the Holy Land, submit to the monotony* of a long sea voyage—the rather that they found not on the Mediterranean the storms or dangers they had rejoiced to encounter on their own sea. They traversed by land the whole of France and Italy, trusting to their

* I give Sismondi's idea as it stands, but there was no question in the matter of monotony or of danger. The journey was made on foot because it was the most laborious way, and the most humble.

swords to procure the necessary subsistence,* if the charity of the faithful did not enough provide for it with alms. The towns of Naples, Amalfi, Gaeta, and Bari, held constant commerce with Syria; and frequent miracles, it was believed, illustrated the Monte Cassino, (St. Benedict again!) on the road of Naples, and the Mount of Angels (Garganus) above Bari.” (Querceta Gargani—verily, laborant; *now*, et orant.) “The pilgrims wished to visit during their journey the monasteries built on these two mountains, and therefore nearly always, either going or returning to the Holy Land, passed through Magna Græcia.

“In one of the earliest years of the eleventh century, about forty of these religious travellers, having returned from the Holy Land, chanced to have met together in Salerno at the moment when a small Saracen fleet came to insult the town, and demand of it a military contribution. The inhabitants

* See farther on, p. 110, the analogies with English arrangements of the same kind.

of South Italy, at this time, abandoned to the delights of their enchanted climate, had lost nearly all military courage. The Salernitani saw with astonishment forty Norman knights, after having demanded horses and arms from the Prince of Salerno, order the gates of the town to be opened, charge the Saracens fearlessly, and put them to flight. The Salernitani followed, however, the example given them by these brave warriors, and those of the Mussulmans who escaped their swords were forced to re-embark in all haste.

“The Prince of Salerno, Guaimar III., tried in vain to keep the warrior-pilgrims at his court: but at his solicitation other companies established themselves on the rocks of Salerno and Amalfi, until, on Christmas Day, 1041, (exactly a quarter of a century before the coronation here at Westminster of the Conqueror,) they gathered their scattered forces at Aversa,* twelve groups of them under twelve chosen counts, and all under

* In Lombardy, south of Pavia.

the Lombard Ardoin, as commander-in-chief." Be so good as to note that,—a marvellous key-note of historical fact about the unjesting Lombards. I cannot find the total Norman number: the chief contingent, under William of the Iron Arm, the son of Tancred of Hauteville, was only of three hundred knights; the Count of Aversa's troop, of the same number, is named as an important part of the little army—admit it for ten times Tancred's, three thousand men in all. At Aversa, these three thousand men form, coolly on Christmas Day, 1041, the design of—well, I told you they didn't *design* much, only, now we're here, we may as well, while we're about it,—overthrow the Greek empire! That was their little game!—a Christmas mumming to purpose. The following year, the whole of Apulia was divided among them.

I will not spoil, by abstracting, the magnificent following history of Robert Guiscard, the most wonderful soldier of that or any other time: I leave you to finish it for

yourselves, only asking you to read together with it, the sketch, in Turner's history of the Anglo-Saxons, of Alfred's long previous war with the Norman Hasting; pointing out to you for foci of character in each contest, the culminating incidents of naval battle. In Guiscard's struggle with the Greeks, he encounters for their chief naval force the Venetian fleet under the Doge Domenico Selvo. The Venetians are at this moment undoubted masters in all naval warfare; the Normans are worsted easily the first day,—the second day, fighting harder, they are defeated again, and so disastrously that the Venetian Doge takes no precautions against them on the third day, thinking them utterly disabled. Guiscard attacks him again on the third day, with the mere wreck of his own ships, and defeats the tired and amazed Italians finally!

The sea-fight between Alfred's ships and those of Hasting, ought to be still more memorable to us. Alfred, as I noticed in last lecture, had built war ships nearly twice

as long as the Normans', swifter, and steadier on the waves. Six Norman ships were ravaging the Isle of Wight; Alfred sent nine of his own to take them. The King's fleet found the Northmen's embayed, and three of them aground. The three others *engaged Alfred's nine, twice their size*; two of the Viking ships were taken, but the third escaped, with only five men! A nation which verily took its pleasures in its Deeds.

But before I can illustrate farther either their deeds or their religion, I must for an instant meet the objection which I suppose the extreme probity of the nineteenth century must feel acutely against these men,—that they all lived by thieving.

Without venturing to allude to the *raison d'être* of the present French and English Stock Exchanges, I will merely ask any of you here, whether of Saxon or Norman blood, to define for himself what he means by the "possession of India." I have no doubt that you all wish to keep India in order,

and in like manner I have assured you that Duke William wished to keep England in order. If you will read the lecture on the life of Sir Herbert Edwardes, which I hope to give in London after finishing this course,* you will see how a Christian British officer can, and does, verily, and with his whole heart, keep in order such part of India as may be entrusted to him, and in so doing, secure our Empire. But the silent feeling and practice of the nation about India is based on quite other motives than Sir Herbert's. Every mutiny, every danger, every terror, and every crime, occurring under, or paralyzing, our Indian legislation, arises directly out of our national desire to live on the loot of India, and the notion always entertained by English young gentlemen and ladies of good position, falling in love with each other without

* This was prevented by the necessity for the re-arrangement of my terminal Oxford lectures: I am now preparing that on Sir Herbert for publication in a somewhat expanded form.

immediate prospect of establishment in Belgrave Square, that they can find in India, instantly on landing, a bungalow ready furnished with the loveliest fans, china, and shawls,—ices and sherbet at command,—four-and-twenty slaves succeeding each other hourly to swing the punkah, and a regiment with a beautiful band to “keep order” outside, all round the house.

Entreating your pardon for what may seem rude in these personal remarks, I will further entreat you to read my account of the death of Cœur de Lion in the third number of ‘Fors Clavigera’—and also the scenes in ‘Ivanhoe’ between Cœur de Lion and Locksley; and commending these few passages to your quiet consideration, I proceed to give you another anecdote or two of the Normans in Italy, twelve years later than those given above, and, therefore, only thirteen years before the battle of Hastings.

Their division of South Italy among them

especially, and their defeat of Venice, had alarmed everybody considerably,—especially the Pope, Leo IX., who did not understand this manifestation of their piety. He sent to Henry III. of Germany, to whom he owed his Popedom, for some German knights, and got five hundred spears; gathered out of all Apulia, Campania, and the March of Ancona, what Greek and Latin troops were to be had, to join his own army of the patrimony of St. Peter; and the holy Pontiff, with this numerous army, but no general, began the campaign by a pilgrimage with all his troops to Monte Cassino, in order to obtain, if it might be, St. Benedict for general.

Against the Pope's collected masses, with St. Benedict, their contemplative but at first inactive general, stood the little army of Normans,—certainly not more than the third of their number—but with Robert Guiscard for captain, and under him his brother, Humphrey of Hauteville, and Richard of Aversa. Not in fear, but in devotion, they

prayed the Pope ‘avec instance,’—to say on what conditions they could appease his anger, and live in peace under him. But the Pope would hear of nothing but their evacuation of Italy. Whereupon, they had to settle the question in the Norman manner.

The two armies met in front of Civitella, on Waterloo day, 18th June, thirteen years, as I said, before the battle of Hastings. The German knights were the heart of the Pope’s army, but they were only five hundred; the Normans surrounded *them* first, and slew them, nearly to a man—and then made extremely short work with the Italians and Greeks. The Pope, with the wreck of them, fled into Civitella; but the townspeople dared not defend their walls, and thrust the Pope himself out of their gates—to meet, alone, the Norman army.

He met it, *not* alone, St. Benedict being with him now, when he had no longer the strength of man to trust in.

The Normans, as they approached him,

threw themselves on their knees,—covered themselves with dust, and implored his pardon and his blessing.

There's a bit of poetry—if you like,—but a piece of steel-clad fact also, compared to which the battles of Hastings and Waterloo both, were mere boys' squabbles.

You don't suppose, you British school-boys, that *you* overthrew Napoleon—*you*? Your prime Minister folded up the map of Europe at the thought of him. Not you, but the snows of Heaven, and the hand of Him who dasheth in pieces with a rod of iron. He casteth forth His ice like morsels,—who can stand before His cold?

But, so far as you have indeed the right to trust in the courage of your own hearts, remember also—it is not in Norman nor Saxon, but in Celtic race that your real strength lies. The battles both of Waterloo and Alma were won by Irish and Scots—by the terrible Scots Greys, and by Sir Colin's Highlanders. Your 'thin red line,'

was kept steady at Alma only by Colonel Yea's swearing at them.

But the old Pope, alone against a Norman army, wanted nobody to swear at him. Steady enough he, having somebody to bless him, instead of swear at him. St. Benedict, namely; whose (memory shall we say?) helped him now at his pinch in a singular manner,—for the Normans, having got the old man's forgiveness, vowed themselves his feudal servants; and for seven centuries afterwards the whole kingdom of Naples remained a fief of St. Peter,—won for him thus by a single man, unarmed, against three thousand Norman knights, captained by Robert Guiscard!

A day of deeds, gentlemen, to some purpose,—*that* 18th of June, anyhow.

Here, in the historical account of Norman character, I must unwillingly stop for to-day—because, as you choose to spend your University money in building ball-rooms instead of lecture-rooms, I dare not keep

you much longer in this black hole, with its nineteenth century ventilation. I try your patience—and tax your breath—only for a few minutes more in drawing the necessary corollaries respecting Norman art.*

How far the existing British nation owes its military prowess to the blood of Normandy and Anjou, I have never examined its genealogy enough to tell you ;—but this I can tell you positively, that whatever constitutional order or personal valour the Normans enforced or taught among the nations they conquered, they did not at first attempt with their own hands to rival them in any of their finer arts, but used both Greek and Saxon sculptors, either as slaves, or hired workmen, and more or less therefore chilled and degraded the

* Given at much greater length in the lecture, with diagrams from Iffley and Poitiers, without which the text of them would be unintelligible. The sum of what I said was a strong assertion of the incapacity of the Normans for any but the rudest and most grotesque sculpture,—Poitiers being, on the contrary, examined and praised as Gallic-French—not Norman.

hearts of the men thus set to servile, or at best, hireling, labour.

In 1874, I went to see Etna, Scylla, Charybdis, and the tombs of the Norman Kings at Palermo; surprised, as you may imagine, to find that there wasn't a stroke nor a notion of Norman work in them. They are, every atom, done by Greeks, and are as pure Greek as the temple of Ægina; but more rich and refined. I drew with accurate care, and with measured profile of every moulding, the tomb built for Roger II. (afterwards Frederick II. was laid in its dark porphyry). And it is a perfect type of the Greek-Christian form of tomb—temple over sarcophagus, in which the pediments rise gradually, as time goes on, into acute angles—get pierced in the gable with foils, and their sculptures thrown outside on their flanks, and become at last in the fourteenth century, the tombs of Verona. But what is the meaning of the Normans employing these Greek slaves for their work in Sicily (within thirty miles of

the field of Himera)? Well, the main meaning is that though the Normans could build, they couldn't carve, and were wise enough not to try to, when they couldn't, as you do now all over this intensely comic and tragic town: but, here in England, they only employed the Saxon with a grudge, and therefore being more and more driven to use barren mouldings without sculpture, gradually developed the structural forms of archivolt, which breaking into the lancet, brighten and balance themselves into the symmetry of Early English Gothic.

But even for the first decoration of the archivolt itself, they were probably indebted to the Greeks in a degree I never apprehended, until by pure happy chance, a friend gave me the clue to it just as I was writing the last pages of this lecture.

In the generalization of ornament attempted in the first volume of the 'Stones of Venice,' I supposed the Norman zigzag (and with some practical truth) to be derived from the angular

notches with which the blow of an axe can most easily decorate, or at least vary, the solid edge of a square fillet. My good friend, and supporter, and for some time back the single trustee of St. George's Guild, Mr. George Baker, having come to Oxford on Guild business, I happened to show him the photographs of the front of Iffley church, which had been collected for this lecture; and immediately afterwards, in taking him through the schools, stopped to show him the Athena of Ægina as one of the most important of the Greek examples lately obtained for us by Professor Richmond. The statue is (rightly) so placed that in looking up to it, the plait of hair across the forehead is seen in a steeply curved arch. "Why," says Mr. Baker, pointing to it, "there's the Norman arch of Iffley." Sure enough, there it exactly was: and a moment's reflection showed me how easily, and with what instinctive fitness, the Norman builders, looking to the Greeks as their absolute masters in sculpture, and

recognizing also, during the Crusades, the hieroglyphic use of the zigzag, for water, by the Egyptians, might have adopted this easily attained decoration at once as the sign of the element over which they reigned, and of the power of the Greek goddess who ruled both it and them.

I do not in the least press your acceptance of such a tradition, nor for the rest, do I care myself whence any method of ornament is derived, if only, as a stranger, you bid it reverent welcome. But much probability is added to the conjecture by the indisputable transition of the Greek egg and arrow moulding into the floral cornices of Saxon and other twelfth century cathedrals in Central France. These and other such transitions and exaltations I will give you the materials to study at your leisure, after illustrating in my next lecture the forces of religious imagination by which all that was most beautiful in them was inspired.



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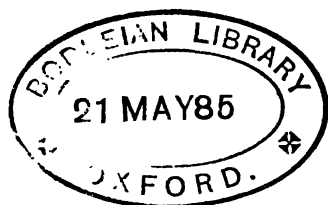
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LECTURE IV.

(Nov. 8, 1884.)

THE PLEASURES OF FANCY.

Cœur de Lion to Elizabeth

(1189 to 1558).

LECTURE IV.

THE PLEASURES OF FANCY.

CŒUR DE LION TO ELIZABETH.

I N using the word “Fancy,” for the mental faculties of which I am to speak to-day, I trust you, at your leisure, to read the Introductory Note to the second volume of ‘Modern Painters’ in the small new edition, which gives sufficient reason for practically including under the single term Fancy, or Fantasy, all the energies of the Imagination,—in the terms of the last sentence of that preface,—“the healthy, voluntary, and necessary,* action of the highest powers of the human mind, on subjects properly demanding and justifying their exertion.”

* Meaning that all healthy minds possess imagination, and use it at will, under fixed laws of truthful perception and memory.

I must farther ask you to read, in the same volume, the close of the chapter 'Of Imagination Penetrative,' pp. 120 to 130, of which the gist, which I must give as the first principle from which we start in our to-day's inquiry, is that "Imagination, rightly so called, has no food, no delight, no care, no perception, except of truth; it is for ever looking under masks, and burning up mists; no fairness of form, no majesty of seeming, will satisfy it; the first condition of its existence is incapability of being deceived."* In that sentence, which is a part, and a very valuable part, of the original book, I still adopted and used unnecessarily the ordinary distinction between Fancy and Imagination — Fancy concerned with lighter things, creating fairies or centaurs, and Imagination creating men; and I was in the habit always of implying by the meaner word Fancy, a voluntary Fallacy, as Wordsworth does in those lines to his

* Vide pp. 124-5.

wife, making of her a mere lay figure for the drapery of his fancy—

Such if thou wert, in all men's view
An universal show,
What would my Fancy have to do,
My feelings to bestow.

But you will at once understand the higher and more universal power which I now wish you to understand by the Fancy, including all imaginative energy, correcting these lines of Wordsworth's to a more worthy description of a true lover's happiness. When a boy falls in love with a girl, you say he has taken a fancy for her; but if he love her rightly, that is to say for her noble qualities, you ought to say he has taken an imagination for her; for then he is endued with the new light of love which sees and tells of the mind in her,—and this neither falsely nor vainly. His love does not bestow, it discovers, what is indeed most precious in his mistress, and most needful for his own life and happiness. Day by

day, as he loves her better, he discerns her more truly; and it is only the truth of his love that does so. Falsehood to her, would at once disenchant and blind him.

In my first lecture of this year, I pointed out to you with what extreme simplicity and reality the Christian faith must have presented itself to the Northern Pagan's mind, in its distinction from his former confused and monstrous mythology. It was also in that simplicity and tangible reality of conception, that this Faith became to them, and to the other savage nations of Europe, Tutress of the real power of their imagination; and it became so, only in so far as it indeed conveyed to them statements which, however in some respects mysterious, were yet most literally and brightly *true*, as compared with their former conceptions. So that while the blind cunning of the savage had produced only misshapen logs or scrawls; the *seeing* imagination of the Christian painters created, for them and for all the world, the perfect

types of the Virgin and of her Son; which became, indeed, Divine, by being, with the most affectionate truth, human.

And the association of this truth in loving conception, with the general honesty and truth of the character, is again conclusively shown in the feelings of the lover to his mistress; which we recognize as first reaching their height in the days of chivalry. The truth and faith of the lover, and his piety to Heaven, are the foundation, in his character, of all the joy in imagination which he can receive from the conception of his lady's—now no more mortal—beauty. She is indeed transfigured before him; but the truth of the transfiguration is greater than that of the lightless aspect she bears to others. When therefore, in my next lecture, I speak of the Pleasures of Truth, as distinct from those of the Imagination,—if either the limits or clearness of brief title had permitted me, I should have said, *untransfigured* truth;—meaning on the one side, truth which we have not

heart enough to transfigure, and on the other, truth of the lower kind which is incapable of transfiguration. One may look at a girl till one believes she is an angel; because, in the best of her, she *is* one; but one can't look at a cockchafer till one believes it is a girl.

With this warning of the connection which exists between the honest intellect and the healthy imagination; and using henceforward the shorter word 'Fancy' for all inventive vision, I proceed to consider with you the meaning and consequences of the frank and eager exertion of the fancy on Religious subjects, between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries.

Its first, and admittedly most questionable action, the promotion of the group of martyr saints of the third century to thrones of uncontested dominion in heaven, had better be distinctly understood, before we debate of it, either with the Iconoclast or the Rationalist. This apotheosis by the Imagi-

nation is the subject of my present lecture. To-day I only describe it,—in my next lecture I will discuss it.

Observe, however, that in giving such a history of the mental constitution of nascent Christianity, we have to deal with, and carefully to distinguish, two entirely different orders in its accepted hierarchy:—one, scarcely founded at all on personal characters or acts, but mythic or symbolic; often merely the revival, the baptized resuscitation of a Pagan deity, or the personified omnipresence of a Christian virtue;—the other, a senate of Patres Conscripti of real persons, great in genius, and perfect, humanly speaking, in holiness; who by their personal force and inspired wisdom, wrought the plastic body of the Church into such noble form as in each of their epochs it was able to receive; and on the right understanding of whose lives, nor less of the affectionate traditions which magnified and illumined their memories, must absolutely depend the value of every estimate we form,

whether of the nature of the Christian Church herself, or of the directness of spiritual agency by which she was guided.*

An important distinction, therefore, is to be noted at the outset, in the objects of this Apotheosis, according as they are, or are not, real persons.

Of these two great orders of Saints, the first, or mythic, belongs—speaking broadly—to the southern or Greek Church alone.

The Gothic Christians, once detached from the worship of Odin and Thor, abjure from their hearts all trust in the elements, and all worship of ideas. They will have their Saints in flesh and blood, their Angels in plume and armour; and nothing incorporeal or invisible. In all the Religious sculpture beside Loire and Seine, you will not find either of the great rivers personified; the dress of the highest seraph is of true steel or sound broad-

* If the reader believes in no spiritual agency, still his understanding of the first letters in the Alphabet of History depends on his comprehending rightly the tempers of the people who *did*.

cloth, neither flecked by hail, nor fringed by thunder; and while the ideal Charity of Giotto at Padua presents her heart in her hand to God, and tramples at the same instant on bags of gold, the treasures of the world, and gives only corn and flowers; that on the west porch of Amiens is content to clothe a beggar with a piece of the staple manufacture of the town.

On the contrary, it is nearly impossible to find in the imagery of the Greek Church, under the former exercise of the Imagination, a representation either of man or beast which purports to represent *only* the person, or the brute. Every mortal creature stands for an Immortal Intelligence or Influence: a Lamb means an Apostle, a Lion an Evangelist, an Angel the Eternal justice or benevolence; and the most historical and indubitable of Saints are compelled to set forth, in their vulgarly apparent persons, a Platonic myth or an Athanasian article.

I therefore take note first of the mythic

saints in succession, whom this treatment of them by the Byzantine Church made afterwards the favourite idols of all Christendom.

I. The most mythic is of course St. Sophia; the shade of the Greek Athena, passing into the 'Wisdom' of the Jewish Proverbs and Psalms, and the Apocryphal 'Wisdom of Solomon.' She always remains understood as a personification only; and has no direct influence on the mind of the unlearned multitude of Western Christendom, except as a godmother,—in which kindly function she is more and more accepted as times go on; her healthy influence being perhaps greater over sweet vicars' daughters in Wakefield—when Wakefield *was*,—than over the prudentest of the rarely prudent Empresses of Byzantium.

II. Of St. Catharine of Egypt there are vestiges of personal tradition which may perhaps permit the supposition of her having really once existed, as a very lovely, witty,

proud, and 'fanciful' girl. She afterwards becomes the Christian type of the Bride, in the 'Song of Solomon,' involved with an ideal of all that is purest in the life of a nun, and brightest in the death of a martyr. It is scarcely possible to overrate the influence of the conceptions formed of her, in ennobling the sentiments of Christian women of the higher orders;—to their practical common sense, as the mistresses of a household or a nation, her example may have been less conducive.

III. St. Barbara, also an Egyptian, and St. Catharine's contemporary, though the most practical of the mythic saints, is also, after St. Sophia, the least corporeal: she vanishes far away into the 'Inclusa Danae,' and her "Turris aenea" becomes a myth of Christian safety, of which the Scriptural significance may be enough felt by merely looking out the texts under the word "Tower," in your concordance; and whose effectual power, in the fortitudes alike of matter and spirit,

was in all probability made impressive enough to all Christendom, both by the fortifications and persecutions of Diocletian. I have endeavoured to mark her general relations to St. Sophia in the little imaginary dialogue between them, given in the eighth lecture of the 'Ethics of the Dust.'

Afterwards, as Gothic architecture becomes dominant, and at last beyond question the most wonderful of all temple-building, St. Barbara's Tower is, of course, its perfected symbol and utmost achievement; and whether in the coronets of countless battlements worn on the brows of the noblest cities, or in the Lombard bell-tower on the mountains, and the English spire on Sarum plain, the geometric majesty of the Egyptian maid became glorious in harmony of defence, and sacred with precision of symbol.

As the buildings which showed her utmost skill were chiefly exposed to lightning, she is invoked in defence from it; and our petition in the Litany, against sudden death, was

written originally to her. The blasphemous corruptions of her into a patroness of cannon and gunpowder, are among the most ludicrous, (because precisely contrary to the original tradition,) as well as the most deadly, insolences and stupidities of Renaissance Art.

IV. St. Margaret of Antioch was a shepherdess; the St. Geneviève of the East; the type of feminine gentleness and simplicity. Traditions of the resurrection of Alcestis perhaps mingle in those of her contest with the dragon; but at all events, she differs from the other three great mythic saints, in expressing the soul's victory over temptation or affliction, by Christ's miraculous help, and without any special power of its own. She is the saint of the meek and of the poor; her virtue and her victory are those of all gracious and lowly womanhood; and her memory is consecrated among the gentle households of Europe; no other name, except those of Jeanne and Jeanie, seems so gifted with a baptismal fairy power of giving grace and peace.

I must be forgiven for thinking, even on this canonical ground, not only of Jeanie Deans, and Margaret of Branksome; but of Meg—Merrilies. My readers will, I fear, choose rather to think of the more doubtful victory over the Dragon, won by the great Margaret of German literature.

V. With much more clearness and historic comfort we may approach the shrine of St. Cecilia; and even on the most prosaic and realistic minds—such as my own—a visit to her house in Rome has a comforting and establishing effect, which reminds one of the carter in ‘Harry and Lucy,’ who is convinced of the truth of a plaustral catastrophe at first incredible to him, as soon as he hears the name of the hill on which it happened. The ruling conception of her is deepened gradually by the enlarged study of Religious music; and is at its best and highest in the thirteenth century, when she rather resists than complies with the already tempting and distracting powers of sound; and we are told

that “cantantibus organis, Cecilia virgo in corde suo soli Domino decantabat, dicens, ‘Fiat, Domine, cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum, ut non confundar.’”

(“While the instruments played, Cecilia the virgin sang in her heart only to the Lord, saying, Oh Lord, be my heart and body made stainless, that I be not confounded.”)

This sentence occurs in my great Service-book of the convent of Beau-pré, written in 1290, and it is illustrated with a miniature of Cecilia sitting silent at a banquet, where all manner of musicians are playing. I need not point out to you how the law, not of sacred music only, so called, but of *all* music, is determined by this sentence; which means in effect that unless music exalt and purify, it is not under St. Cecilia’s ordinance, and it is not, virtually, music at all.

Her confessed power at last expires amidst a hubbub of odes and sonatas; and I suppose her presence at a Morning Popular is as little anticipated as desired. Unconfessed, she

is of all the mythic saints for ever the greatest; and the child in its nurse's arms, and every tender and gentle spirit which resolves to purify in itself,—as the eye for seeing, so the ear for hearing,—may still, whether behind the Temple veil,* or at the fireside, and by the wayside, hear Cecilia sing.

* “But, standing in the lowest place,
And mingled with the work-day crowd,
A poor man looks, with lifted face,
And hears the Angels cry aloud.

“He seeks not how each instant flies,
One moment is Eternity;
His spirit with the Angels cries
To Thee, to Thee, continually.

“What if, Isaiah-like, he know
His heart be weak, his lips unclean,
His nature vile, his office low,
His dwelling and his people mean?

“To such the Angels spake of old—
To such of yore, the glory came;
These altar fires can ne'er grow cold:
Then be it his, that cleansing flame.”

These verses, part of a very lovely poem, “To Thee all Angels cry aloud,” in the ‘Monthly Packet’ for September 1873,

It would delay me too long just now to trace in specialty farther the functions of the mythic, or, as in another sense they may be truly called, the universal, Saints: the next greatest of them, St. Ursula, is essentially British,—and you will find enough about her in ‘*Fors Clavigera*’; the others, I will simply give you in entirely authoritative order from the St. Louis’ Psalter, as he read and thought of them.

The proper Service-book of the thirteenth century consists first of the pure Psalter; then of certain essential passages of the Old Testament—invariably the Song of Miriam at the Red Sea and the last song of Moses;—ordinarily also the 12th of Isaiah and the prayer of Habakkuk; while St. Louis’ Psalter has also the prayer of Hannah, and that of Hezekiah (Isaiah xxxviii. 10—20); the Song are only signed ‘*Veritas*.’ The volume for that year (the 16th) is well worth getting, for the sake of the admirable papers in it by Miss Sewell, on questions of the day; by Miss A. C. Owen, on Christian Art; and the unsigned Cameos from English History.

of the Three Children; the Benedictus, the Magnificat, and the Nunc Dimittis. Then follows the Athanasian Creed; and then, as in all Psalters after their chosen Scripture passages, the collects to the Virgin, the Te Deum, and Service to Christ, beginning with the Psalm 'The Lord reigneth'; and then the collects to the greater individual saints, closing with the Litany, or constant prayer for mercy to Christ, and all saints; of whom the order is,—Archangels, Patriarchs, Apostles, Disciples, Innocents, Martyrs, Confessors, Monks, and Virgins. Of women the Magdalen *always* leads; St. Mary of Egypt usually follows, but *may* be the last. Then the order varies in every place, and prayer-book, no recognizable supremacy being traceable; except in relation to the place, or person, for whom the book was written. In St. Louis', St. Geneviève (the last saint to whom he prayed on his death-bed) follows the two Maries; then come—memorable for you best, as easiest, in this six-foil group,—

Saints Catharine, Margaret, and Scolastica,
Agatha, Cecilia, and Agnes; and then ten
more, whom you may learn or not as you like:
I note them now only for future reference,—
more lively and easy for your learning,—by
their French names,

Felicité,
Colombe,
Christine,

—

Aurée, Honorine,

—

Radegonde,
Praxède,
Euphémie,

—

Bathilde, Eugénie.

Such was the system of Theology into which the Imaginative Religion of Europe was crystallized, by the growth of its own best faculties, and the influence of all accessible and credible authorities, during the period between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries inclusive. Its spiritual power is completely represented by the angelic and apostolic dynasties, and the women-saints in Paradise; for of the men-saints, beneath the apostles and prophets, none but St. Christopher, St. Nicholas, St. Anthony, St. James, and St. George, attained anything like the influence of Catherine or Cecilia; for the very curious reason, that the men-saints were much more true, real, and numerous. St. Martin was revered all over Europe, but definitely, as a man, and the Bishop of Tours. So St. Ambrose at Milan, and St. Gregory at Rome, and hundreds of good men more, all over the world; while the really good women remained, though not rare, inconspicuous. The virtues of French Clotilde, and Swiss

Berthe, were painfully borne down in the balance of visible judgment, by the guilt of the Gonerils, Regans, and Lady Macbeths, whose spectral procession closes only with the figure of Eleanor in Woodstock maze; and in dearth of nearer objects, the daily brighter powers of fancy dwelt with more concentrated devotion on the stainless ideals of the earlier maid-martyrs. And observe, even the loftier fame of the men-saints above named, as compared with the rest, depends on precisely the same character of indefinite personality; and on the representation, by each of them, of a moral idea which may be embodied and painted in a miraculous legend; credible, as history, even then, only to the vulgar; but powerful over them, nevertheless, exactly in proportion to the degree in which it can be pictured and fancied as a living creature. Consider even yet in these days of mechanism, how the dullest John Bull cannot with perfect complacency adore *himself*, except under the figure of Britannia

or the British Lion; and how the existence of the popular jest-book, which might have seemed secure in its necessity to our weekly recreation, is yet virtually centred on the imaginary animation of a puppet, and the imaginary elevation to reason of a dog. But in the Middle Ages, this action of the Fancy, now distorted and despised, was the happy and sacred tutress of every faculty of the body and soul; and the works and thoughts of art, the joys and toils of men, rose and flowed on in the bright air of it, with the aspiration of a flame, and the beneficence of a fountain.

And now, in the rest of my lecture, I had intended to give you a broad summary of the rise and fall of English art, born under this code of theology, and this enthusiasm of duty;—of its rise, from the rude vaults of Westminster, to the finished majesty of Wells;—and of its fall, from that brief hour of the thirteenth century, through the wars of the Bolingbroke, and the pride of

the Tudor, and the lust of the Stewart, to expire under the mocking snarl and ruthless blow of the Puritan. But you know that I have always, in my most serious work, allowed myself to be influenced by those Chances, as they are now called,—but to my own feeling and belief, guidances, and even, if rightly understood, commands,—which, as far as I have read history, the best and sincerest men think providential. Had this lecture been on common principles of art, I should have finished it as I intended, without fear of its being the worse for my consistency. But it deals, on the contrary, with a subject, respecting which every sentence I write, or speak, is of importance in its issue; and I allowed, as you heard, the momentary observation of a friend, to give an entirely new cast to the close of my last lecture. Much more, I feel it incumbent upon me in this one, to take advantage of the most opportune help, though in an unexpected direction, given me by my constant tutor,

Professor Westwood. I went to dine with him, a day or two ago, mainly—being neither of us, I am thankful to say, blue-ribanded—to drink his health on his recovery from his recent accident. Whereupon he gave me a feast of good talk, old wine, and purple manuscripts. And having had as much of all as I could well carry, just as it came to the good-night, out he brings, for a finish, this leaf of manuscript in my hand, which he has lent me to show you,—a leaf of the Bible of Charles the Bald!

A leaf of it, at least, as far as you or I could tell, for Professor Westwood's copy is just as good, in all the parts finished, as the original: and, for all practical purpose, I show you here in my hand a leaf of the Bible which your own King Alfred saw with his own bright eyes, and from which he learned his child-faith in the days of dawning thought!

There are few English children who do not know the story of Alfred, the king, letting the cakes burn, and being chidden by his

peasant hostess. How few English children—nay, how few perhaps of their educated, not to say learned, elders—reflect upon, if even they know, the far different scenes through which he had passed when a child!

Concerning his father, his mother, and his own childhood, suppose you were to teach your children first these following main facts, before you come to the toasting of the muffin?

His father, educated by Helmstan, Bishop of Winchester, had been offered the throne of the great Saxon kingdom of Mercia in his early youth; had refused it, and entered, as a novice under St. Swithin, the monastery at Winchester. From St. Swithin, he received the monastic habit, and was appointed by Bishop Helmstan one of his sub-deacons!

“The quiet seclusion which Ethelwulph’s slow* capacity and meek temper coveted” was

* Turner, quoting William of Malmesbury, “Crassioris et hebetis ingenii,”—meaning that he had neither ardour for war, nor ambition for kingship.

not permitted to him by fate. The death of his elder brother left him the only living representative of the line of the West Saxon princes. His accession to the throne became the desire of the people. He obtained a dispensation from the Pope to leave the cloister; assumed the crown of Egbert; and retained Egbert's prime minister, Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne, who was the Minister in peace and war, the Treasurer, and the Counsellor, of the kings of England, over a space, from first to last, of fifty years.

Alfred's mother, Osburga, must have been married for love. She was the daughter of Oslac, the king's cup-bearer. Extolled for her piety and understanding, she bore the king four sons; dying before the last, Alfred, was five years old, but leaving him St. Swithin for his tutor. How little do any of us think, in idle talk of rain or no rain on St. Swithin's day, that we speak of the man whom Alfred's father obeyed as a monk, and whom his mother chose for his guardian!

Alfred, both to father and mother, was the best beloved of their children. On his mother's death, his father sent him, being then five years old, with a great retinue through France and across the Alps, to Rome; and there the Pope anointed him King, (heir-apparent to the English throne), at the request of his father.

Think of it, you travellers through the Alps by tunnels, that you may go to balls at Rome, or hells at Monaco. Here is another manner of journey, another goal for it, appointed for your little king. At twelve, he was already the best hunter among the Saxon youths. Be sure he could sit his horse at five. Fancy the child, with his keen genius, and holy heart, riding with his Saxon chiefs beside him, by the Alpine flowers under Velan or Sempione, and down among the olives to Pavia, to Perugia, to Rome; there, like the little fabled Virgin, ascending the temple steps, and consecrated to be King of England by the great Leo, Leo of the Leonine city, the saviour of Rome from the Saracen.

Two years afterwards, he rode again to Rome beside his father; the West Saxon king bringing presents to the Pope, a crown of pure gold weighing four pounds, a sword adorned with pure gold, two golden images,* four Saxon silver dishes; and giving a gift of gold to all the Roman clergy and nobles,† and of silver to the people.

No idle sacrifices or symbols, these gifts of courtesy! The Saxon King rebuilt on the highest hill that is bathed by Tiber, the Saxon street and school, the Borgo,‡ of whose miraculously arrested burning, Raphael's fresco

* Turner, Book IV.,—not a vestige of hint from the stupid Englishman, what the Pope wanted with crown, sword, or image! My own guess would be, that it meant an offering of the entire household strength, in war and peace, of the Saxon nation,—their crown, their sword, their household gods, Irminsul and Irminsula, their feasting, and their robes.

† Again, what does this mean? Gifts of honour to the Pope's immediate attendants—silver to all Rome? Does the modern reader think this is buying little Alfred's consecration too dear, or that Leo is selling the Holy Ghost?

‡ "Quæ in eorum lingua Burgus dicitur,—the place where it was situated was called the Saxon street, Saxonum vicum" (Anastasius, quoted by Turner). There seems to me some

preserves the story to this day. And further he obtained from Leo the liberty of all Saxon men from bonds in penance ;—a first phase this of Magna Charta, obtained more honourably, from a more honourable person, than that document, by which Englishmen of this day suppose they live, move, and have being.

How far into Alfred's soul, at seven years old, sank any true image of what Rome was, and had been ; of what her Lion Lord was, who had saved her from the Saracen, and her Lion Lord had been, who had saved her from the Hun ; and what this Spiritual Dominion was, and was to be, which could make and unmake kings, and save nations, and put armies to flight ; I leave those to say, who have learned to reverence childhood. This, at least, is sure, that the days of Alfred were bound each to each, not only by their natural piety, but by the actual presence and

evidence in the scattered passages I have not time to collate, that at this time the Saxon Burg, or tower, of a village, included the idea of its school.

appeal to his heart, of all that was then in the world most noble, beautiful, and strong against Death.

In this living Book of God he had learned to read, thus early; and with perhaps nobler ambition than of getting the prize of a gilded psalm-book at his mother's knee, as you are commonly told of him. What sort of psalm-book it was, however, you may see from this leaf in my hand. For, as his father and he returned from Rome that year, they stayed again at the Court of Charlemagne's grandson, whose daughter, the Princess Judith, Ethelwolf was wooing for Queen of England, (not queen-consort, merely, but crowned queen, of authority equal to his own.) From whom Alfred was like enough to have had a reading lesson or two out of her father's Bible; and like enough, the little prince, to have stayed her hand at this bright leaf of it, the Lion-leaf, bearing the symbol of the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

You cannot, of course, see anything but

the glittering from where you sit; nor even if you afterwards look at it near, will you find a figure the least admirable or impressive to you. It is not like Landseer's Lions in Trafalgar Square; nor like Tenniel's in 'Punch'; still less like the real ones in Regent's Park. Neither do I show it you as admirable in any respect of art, other than that of skilfullest illumination. I show it you, as the most interesting Gothic type of the imagination of Lion; which, after the Roman Eagle, possessed the minds of all European warriors; until, as they themselves grew selfish and cruel, the symbols which at first meant heaven-sent victory, or the strength and presence of some Divine spirit, became to them only the signs of their own pride or rage: the victor raven of Corvus sinks into the shamed falcon of Marmion, and the lion-heartedness which gave the glory and the peace of the gods to Leonidas, casts the glory and the might of kingdom to the dust before Chalus.*

* 'Fors Clavigera,' March, 1871, p. 19. Yet read the

That death, 6th April, 1199, ended the advance of England begun by Alfred, under the pure law of Religious Imagination. She began, already, in the thirteenth century, to be decoratively, instead of vitally, religious. The history of the Religious Imagination expressed between Alfred's time and that of Cœur de Lion, in this symbol of the Lion only, has material in it rather for all my seven lectures than for the closing section of one; but I must briefly specify to you the main sections of it. I will keep clear of my favourite number seven, and ask you to recollect the meaning of only Five, Mythic Lions.

First of all, in Greek art, remember to keep yourselves clear about the difference between the Lion and the Gorgon.

The Gorgon is the power of evil in heaven, conquered by Athena, and thenceforward becoming her ægis, when she is herself the

preceding pages, and learn the truth of the lion heart, while you mourn its pride. Note especially his absolute law against usury.

inflictor of evil. Her helmet is then the helmet of Orcus.

But the Lion is the power of death on earth, conquered by Heracles, and becoming thenceforward both his helmet and ægis. All ordinary architectural lion sculpture is derived from the Heracleian.

Then the Christian Lions are, first, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah—Christ Himself as Captain and Judge: "He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron," (the opposite power of His adversary, is rarely intended in sculpture unless in association with the serpent—"incolcabis supra leonem et aspidem"); secondly, the Lion of St. Mark, the power of the Gospel going out to conquest; thirdly, the Lion of St. Jerome, the wrath of the brute creation changed into love by the kindness of man; and, fourthly, the Lion of the Zodiac, which is the Lion of Egypt and of the Lombardic pillar-supports in Italy; these four, if you remember, with the Nemean Greek one, five

altogether, will give you, broadly, interpretation of nearly all Lion symbolism in great art. How they degenerate into the British door knocker, I leave you to determine for yourselves, with such assistances as I may be able to suggest to you in my next lecture; but, as the grotesqueness of human history plans it, there is actually a connection between that last degradation of the Leonine symbol, and its first and noblest significance.

You see there are letters round this golden Lion of Alfred's spelling-book, which his princess friend was likely enough to spell for him. They are two Latin hexameters:—

Hic Leo, surgendo, portas confregit Averni
Qui nunquam dormit, nusquam dormitat, in
ævum.

(This Lion, rising, burst the gates of Death:
This, who sleeps not, nor shall sleep, for ever.)

Now here is the Christian change of the Heracleian conquest of Death into Christ's Resurrection. Samson's bearing away the gates

of Gaza is another like symbol, and to the mind of Alfred, taught, whether by the Pope Leo for his schoolmaster, or by the great-granddaughter of Charlemagne for his schoolmistress, it represented, as it did to all the intelligence of Christendom, Christ in His own first and last, Alpha and Omega, description of Himself,—

“I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and *have the keys* of Hell and of Death.” And in His servant St. John’s description of Him—

“Who is the Faithful Witness and the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”

All this assuredly, so far as the young child, consecrated like David, the youngest of his brethren, conceived his own new life in Earth and Heaven,—he understood already in the Lion symbol. But of all this I had no thought* when I chose the prayer of

* The reference to the Bible of Charles le Chauve was added to my second lecture (page 70), in correcting the press, mistakenly put into the text instead of the notes.

Alfred as the type of the Religion of his era, in its dwelling, not on the deliverance from the punishment of sin, but from the poisonous sleep and death of it. Will you ever learn that prayer again,—youths who are to be priests, and knights, and kings of England, in these the latter days? when the gospel of Eternal Death is preached here in Oxford to you for the Pride of Truth? and “the mountain of the Lord’s House” has become a Golgotha, and the “new song before the throne” sunk into the rolling thunder of the death rattle of the Nations, crying, “O Christ, where is Thy Victory!”

NOTES.

1. *The Five Christmas Days.* (These were drawn out on a large and conspicuous diagram.)

These days, as it happens, sum up the History of their Five Centuries.

Christmas Day,	496.	Clovis baptized.
„	„	800. Charlemagne crowned.
„	„	1041. Vow of the Count of Aversa (Page 108).
„	„	1066. The Conqueror crowned.
„	„	1130. Roger II. crowned King of the Two Sicilies.

2. For conclusion of the whole matter two pictures were shown and commented on—the two most perfect pictures in the world.

(1) A small piece from Tintoret's *Paradiso* in the Ducal Palace, representing the group of St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Augustine, and behind St. Augustine his mother watching him, her chief joy even in Paradise.

(2) The Arundel Society's reproduction of the Altar-piece by Giorgione in his native hamlet of Castel Franco. The Arundel Society has done more for us than we have any notion of.





